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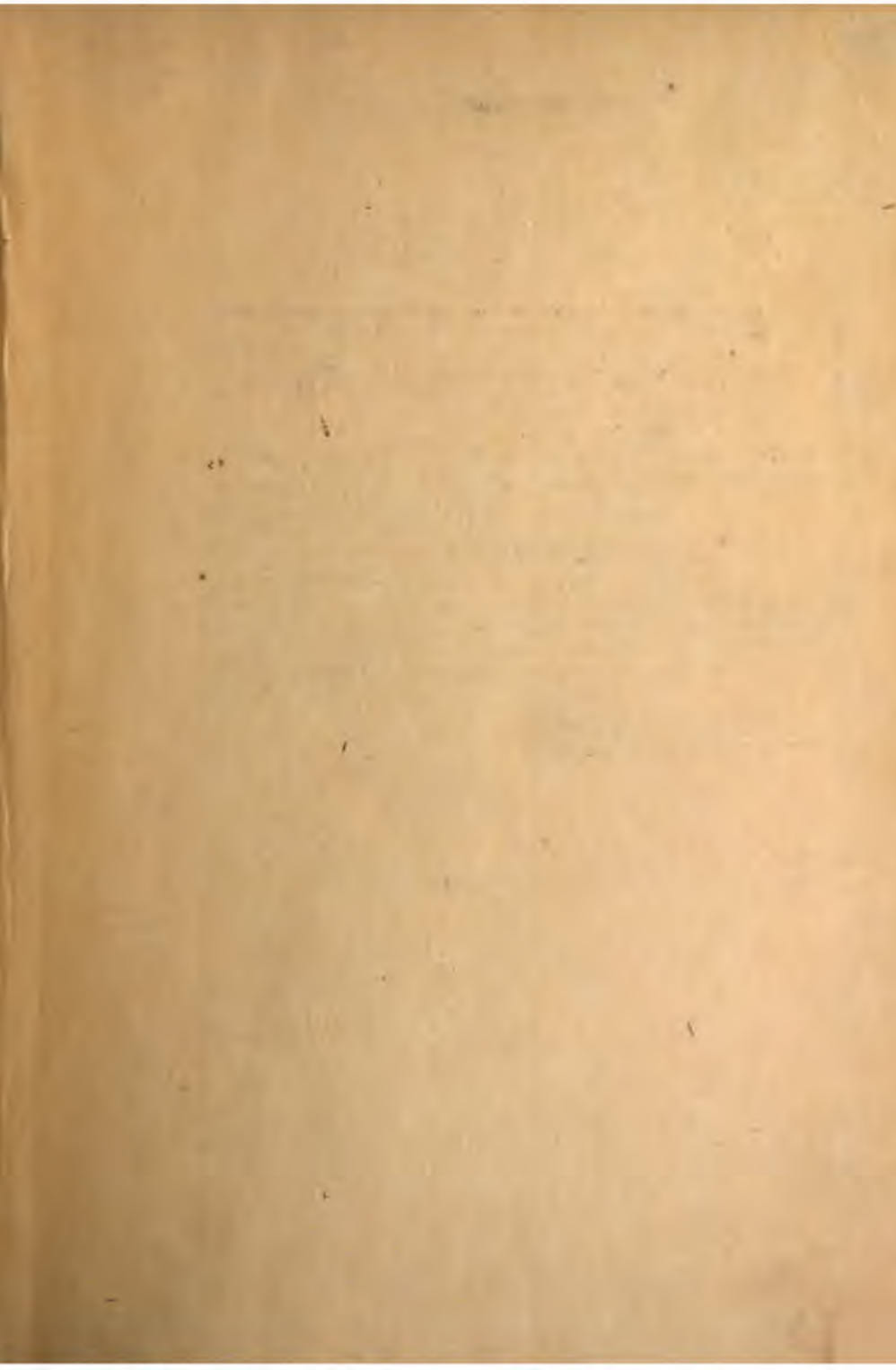
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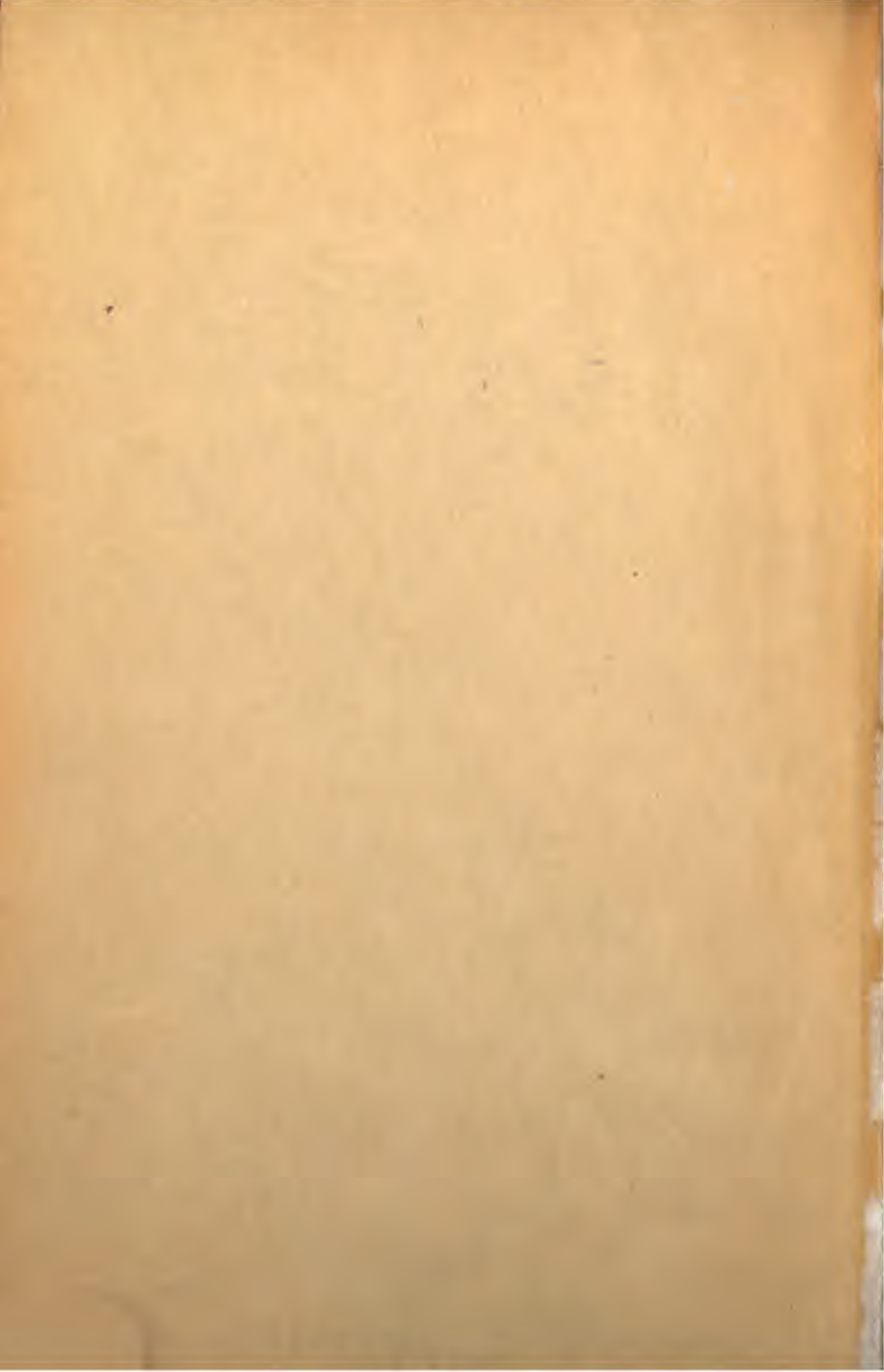
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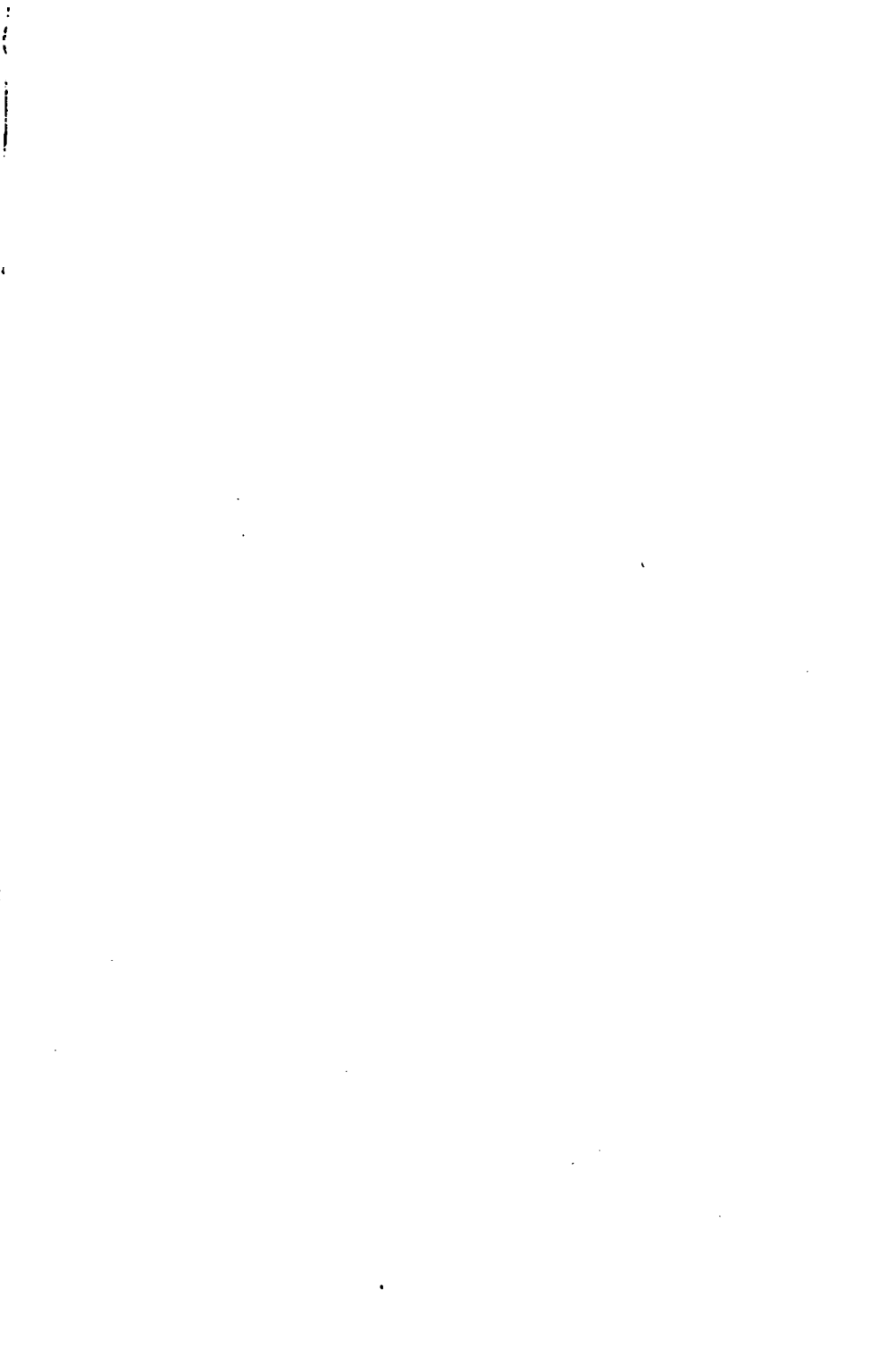
London *Hutchinson* 1901. 12+316 p. illus. portrait, O. 16s.

A memoir of Henry Broadhurst, 1840- , labor leader. Contains interesting reminiscences of his early life as blacksmith and stonemason, his political career as secretary of the Labor Representation League, 1873, secretary to the Parliamentary Committee of the Trade-Union Congress, 1875-1890, member of Parliament, 1880- , Under-secretary of State in the House, September, 1886; of value for the history of the labor movement and labor representation in England.

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Henry Broadhurst

• F. Jenkins. Belvoir, Paris.

HENRY BROADHURST, M.P.

THE STORY OF HIS LIFE IN
A STONEMASON'S BENCH
AND TREASURY

TOLD BY HIMSELF

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY THE AUTHOR

N.C.



London HUTCHINSON & CO.

Paternoster Row 1900



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HENRY BROADHURST, M.P.

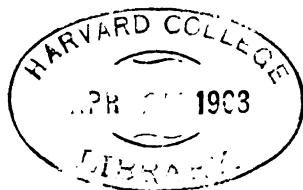
*THE STORY OF HIS LIFE FROM
A STONEMASON'S BENCH TO THE
TREASURY BENCH*  

TOLD BY HIMSELF

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
AUGUSTINE BIRRELL, K.C.

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INTRODUCTION

WHY Mr. Broadhurst, who has been both a stonemason and an Under-Secretary of State, should pitch upon me, who have never been either, or done him any kind of injury, to write a wholly unnecessary and therefore impertinent Introduction to his sturdy Memoirs, would be beyond my power of guessing, had I not often noticed the absurd timidity of men who have reaped to the full all the advantages of what is called an "imperfect" or "irregular" education when they find themselves engaged in what they conceive to be a literary enterprise. As this timidity is often their only one, we may be thankful for it. Yet it is absurd enough.

Here is Mr. Broadhurst, who stands foursquare to all the winds that blow, who has earned his own living ever since he was twelve years old, who got married at nineteen, who knows all the mysteries of the forge and has wrought in stone, who has faced with ready wit and determined aspect every kind of audience, big, little, and respectable, friendly, false,

and furious, in almost every town in Great Britain, who has defended his character from calumnious assaults, frontal, side, and secret, who has drafted reports, framed resolutions, considered amendments, and made play with statistics, who has piloted Bills through all their stages in the House of Commons, who has spoken on innumerable occasions in that difficult Assembly, both from the front benches and the back, above the gangway and below it, who has been greeted with every kind of cheer, not excepting the ironical, who has known both failure and success, what it is to win and what to lose an election, to be in and out of Parliament—and yet when it comes to the making of a little book, this hero of a hundred fights, this tanned veteran, is as shy as a girl at her first dinner party, trembles at the task he has undertaken, and claims the aid of the first literary gentleman he encounters in the lobby.

Hazlitt has written a famous essay “On the Shyness of Scholars”; an essay might be written “On the Shyness of Stonemasons when they commence Author.” It is a shyness perhaps not difficult to account for. To a man who has learnt a regular trade, anything outside it seems difficult. To despise the amateur is a sound, healthy note of the skilled hand who has been taught, peradventure with many kicks, both to learn and to mind his own business.

So (after what rebuffs in other quarters I never

Introduction

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cared to inquire), in what he took to be his necessities, Mr. Broadhurst turned to me. It was in vain that I assured him he needed no assistance either in the preparation or revision of his own Memoirs. He persisted that he did, and told me so often that, though he could build a house, or the best parts of one, he could not write a book, and depicted with so much stormy eloquence the pitfalls and gins and snares that beset (so he imagined) his path, that I could not but place my poor services and hackneyed experience at his disposal. I promised to do this, and a promise is a promise when made in the lobby of the House of Commons, even though its performance may make you ridiculous.

Of course, when it came to the point, my stipulated services (save this Introduction) were not really required. When Mr. Broadhurst left off bemoaning his "imperfect" or "irregular" education, and sat himself down to put his Memoirs together, he found himself at no great disadvantage after all, and in a space of time that would have brought no discredit upon the nimblest-witted writer Fleet Street ever bred, produced a manuscript which could hardly have required less correction and revision had it been the work of the most hardened of living biographers.

It is ungrateful to complain, as some may be heard doing, of the multiplication of Memoirs; for of all the books that get themselves written in these bad

days, Memoirs are the most likely to contain something worth reading, the least likely to be altogether futile. The place where a man was born, the origins and occupations of his parents, the kind of education he managed to get, his friends and contemporaries, the circumstances in which he first went out into the world, and how he fared there—none of these things can fail to be interesting. It is not *Life* that is dull.

Mr. Broadhurst, for example, tells us in his first paragraph that he was born at Littlemore, near Oxford. What can be more delightfully unexpected than Littlemore? and in 1840! During all Dr. Newman's solemn years of retirement, when such strange visitants, reserved for fates so varied as J. A. Froude and Mark Pattison and the repulsed Manning, came tapping at his door, the village lanes resounded with the merry cries of the future Parliamentary Secretary of the Trades-Union Congress, a body which records a movement certainly no less significant than the one inseparably associated with the name of the great Cardinal of Rome.

The chief significance of this Memoir is derived from the fact that hitherto in England we have had but few politicians who have found their way to the Treasury Bench from a poor man's cottage. There is a considerable sameness in the early histories of even Under-Secretaries of State. They are apt

to come from the same places and to display a tedious similarity of characteristic. Sometimes reports reach the outer world of an Eton dinner, where Prime Ministers past, present, and future sit cheek by jowl, Bishops jest agreeably with Field-M Marshals, Governors-General of India and Canada exchange confidences of a kind never likely to be published by the indiscreetest of widows, Secretaries of State, old Parliamentary hacks, palm off upon Ambassadors, past-masters in the art of polite inattention, narratives to which the House of Commons has long learnt to turn its deafest ear, and all alike gaze with boyish rapture upon each other's garters, stars, and ribbons. At the given signal they rise in their places, clink their glasses, and cry as one man, "*Floreat Etona!*" How hard they strive to believe that they owe it all to Eton ! It is an affecting scene, even when read about in a copyright report. Gratitude to an ancient foundation of learning, be it school or college, is always pleasing, and for my part I greatly prefer Johnson's filial regard for Pembroke to Gibbon's contempt for Magdalen ; though if it were a question of rational basis, it could hardly be disputed that the historian had more reason for his contempt than the moralist for his affection.

But in the matter of the Eton dinner, those who stand outside in the raw air, blowing down their fingers to keep them warm, would scarcely be doing justice to whatever education they have picked up

elsewhere if they did not take occasion to point out that perhaps the majority of these well-decorated guests owe their careers and their pleasant (if they are pleasant) places in the sun, not to their old school, famous as she is, but to the fact that they belong (nor are they to be blamed for doing so) to the classes of society from ranks of which the occupants of such offices and posts as theirs have been of necessity selected.

Mr. Broadhurst has done something to break this monotony. He was not at Eton nor at Christ Church, though his acquaintance with the latter seat of instruction was at one time extensive, peculiar, and lofty (see p. 8). This imparts zest and novelty to the pages of the Memoir.

Mr. Broadhurst's entirely honest account of his early education will hardly excite the approbation of that solemn body the National Union of Teachers, who see all things in the desk and the primer. In the frankness of his aversion to his studies, his aloofness from his masters, his unfeigned delight in bidding them a long farewell at the scandalous age of twelve, his passion, still strong in him, for the open air, and for all such sports and pastimes as are open in "Merry England" to the sons of the cottager, the youthful Broadhurst would have made, had his lot been different, a first-rate public school boy. But, indeed, of Englishmen it may be said generally that

they are all woven strangely of the same piece. "Were I not a game-preserver, I *must* have been a poacher," said the old squire, in tones of sorrowful conviction. In most of our Toryism there is a strong dash of the Radical, and most of our Radicals are well-bottomed in Conservatism. The task of our poor teachers is indeed stupendous.

Of the animated and useful part Mr. Broadhurst has played for thirty years in what are called Labour questions, a brief, modest, and somewhat too impersonal account will be found in the following pages. He was fortunate in the hour of his birth, and has been able to see the law as to workmen's combinations, conspiracy, and employers' liability placed upon a firm, just, and, on the whole, rational basis. Seldom has such rapid progress been made so peacefully in matters so dangerously charged and stuffed to the mouth with class prejudice and angry passions. If there are any fine gentlemen left who sneer at the extension of the suffrage and "Beales, M.A.," and are not yet alive to the probable horrors the gift of the vote averted, their attention may be called to the questions they will find considered in this Memoir.

Mr. Broadhurst has most usefully devoted a generous and well-informed page to the position, often hard, always dangerous, of the Labour Member in the House of Commons. Here he has his hand

on the very pulse of the machine. In that direction lies the future of representative institutions in England. The path is not yet clearly defined, it cannot be seen climbing the distant hills—obviously it must traverse a difficult and confused tract of country; but that it will lead to a place of honour and safety it were cowardice to doubt; and it is as a forerunner that Mr. Broadhurst will be best remembered, and his Memoir, frank and good-tempered, be longest read.

A. B.

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A FOREWORD

MANY friends whose opinions on many questions I value have from time to time urged me to commit to writing some experiences of my life. After many appeals to do so I commenced the task, only to abandon it on the ground that the mistaken zeal of friendship had prompted me to an act of folly and presumption. But during the last few years I have received numerous applications from divergent quarters in Great Britain, and from persons outside the United Kingdom, for notices of my career. And these repeated applications have reawakened the idea of giving my life's story as a whole and in fairly consecutive order, rather than in piecemeal articles. It is a risky undertaking, and I must, with others who have gone before me, prepare myself for the consequences of my rashness. Diaries, memoranda, and the like have not been in my line, and I must therefore rely upon a fairly good memory, together with such aid as I can gather from reports and other printed documents concerning matters with which I have been associated in later years. Let me at once assure my readers that I never had a way marked out in my own mind. I have gone from point to point

A Foreword

as circumstances seemed to require me. "One step's enough for me," as Cardinal Newman sang. I am not conscious of ever having a goal for my ambition—that is, if I have at any time possessed an ambition. I have never burnt the midnight oil considering my next move. Each succeeding morning I have done the work nearest to hand. On the Saturday in November, 1872, when I had done my last day's work as a stonemason, I should have thought the man beside himself who had then ventured to tell me that it was my farewell to my trade. I left the firm which then employed me, fully intending to obtain employment in some other firm the following week. That is now twenty-eight years back, and I have not yet sought the other firm. Even at this distance of time I constantly dream that I am working at my trade, and the sudden awakening to reality dispels the delusion almost with a shock. I still keep sufficient of my tools to make another start, though I fear I should not be a first-rate hand at it were I to try. Whatever positions I have occupied, I have blundered into them or stumbled upon them without thought or premeditation. With these explanations and apologies to those who may care to read these pages, I commit myself to the tender mercies and indulgence of the public.

HENRY BROADHURST

CHAPTER I

BLACKSMITH'S FORGE AND STONEMASON'S BENCH

I WAS born in the parish of Littlemore, near the city of Oxford, in the month of April, 1840. My father was a journeyman stonemason with a large family, of which I made the eleventh or twelfth member. Our cottage, which stood some distance from the village, was the largest of a group of three, the two smaller lying at the back after the style of an old-fashioned pigeon-cote. In the dark and dreary months of winter, stoats, weasels, and field-mice abounded in the surrounding fields, and my earliest recollections are full of the keen delight which we children took in the untrammelled life of the fields and orchards and brooks. Chief among our pastimes we reckoned a hedgehog hunt, in which we felt a keener zest because of the reward gained from the sale of its quills. Money was scarce enough to make such considerations of value, for the wages of a journeyman stonemason at that time varied from twenty to twenty-four

shillings a week during nine or ten months of the year, while the remainder were spent in enforced idleness. Yet, despite the narrowness and privations of the life, I loved my home and the rough, free existence, spent largely in the open air, working in the garden and tending the pigs.

No life is without its drawbacks, and into mine came the inevitable and irksome restraint of education. I was sent to a private school, and for the fee of sixpence a week I received plenty of teaching combined with plenty of stick. The schoolmaster doubtless possessed an excellent capacity to teach, but my capacity to learn was by no means equally large. We held divergent views in the matter of spelling, and when a controversy arose, I as the weaker naturally went to the wall, and the man with the cane triumphed. Happily, my services were frequently needed at home, and about the age of twelve I finally escaped the taskmaster and was able to apply myself to more congenial pursuits. These pursuits possessed at least the advantage of variety. When I could be spared from the garden and other work at home I was employed on casual jobs—anything that brought recompense was welcome: digging neighbours' gardens, carrying messages, tending pigs on stubble land after harvest—all was grist that came to the mill. Gleaning was a special delight, and the united efforts of our family in the harvest-field would sometimes result in several bushels of wheat, barley, and beans. In the fruit season we used to take the garden produce to market in Oxford, and if

Blacksmith's Forge and Stonemason's Bench 5

prices proved good our reward took the shape of a dainty called "short cakes" and a little extra sugar—then costing eightpence and tenpence a pound. This meant a little jam for the winter, and for present enjoyment a fruit pudding or apple dumplings.

My first regular employment was in a blacksmith's shop. Life in the forge I found full of new delights. Blowing the bellows, taking the horses home after shoeing, wielding the heavy hammer while the smith fashioned the shoe with the smaller one, cutting threads on bolts and nuts, all interested me hugely. I felt myself a person of importance. The blacksmith himself was no inconsiderable person, under the shade of his spreading sycamore. His opinion on all kinds of subjects was eagerly sought by all sorts and conditions of people. In the village club he was a person to be reckoned with; at the village feast, bedecked with blue and white ribbons interwoven and festooned, he would proudly bear aloft one of the banners. Big, brawny, and sober, no one dare take liberties with him, but all esteemed him highly. My father, as a chapel-goer, did not believe in the frivolity of village feasts, and therefore wore no ribbons; nor were clubs more to his liking. What wonder then that I, a hero-worshipper like all boys, should set up the blacksmith on my shrine as the ideal man, with his great frame neatly clothed in black, shoddy coat, and smart trousers somewhere about six inches too long, and rolled up over the boots to show the bright yellow calico lining.

But I was not allowed to worship my hero long. The time came for me, as it had come for my brothers before me, to learn my father's craft. Reluctantly I bade farewell to the forge and the fields, where I had found many friends among the beasts and birds and living things. My work in the forge had lengthened my limbs and hardened my muscles till I was in a physical condition to meet the demands of any employment. I had by this time reached the age of thirteen, and was big, strong, and active beyond my years.

My father's employers gave permission for me to enter the shop as a beginner, and thus opened out the new and broader life of a stonemason. As the youngest employee many duties besides the acquisition of a knowledge of my trade fell to my lot. At eight o'clock in the morning I had to see that hot tea and coffee were ready for thirty or forty men. Then at ten I must start on my tour of "the shop" to see how many pints of beer would be wanted at eleven, and this task had to be repeated at three o'clock. There were plenty of public-houses close at hand, but I must fetch the beer from one nearly a mile away, because the landlord was foreman of the yard—a position invested with large authority. Therefore the duty of fetching the beer meant a long trudge twice a day for me. If a man did not drink beer he was regarded by his fellows as a muff or a "Ranter." Such men were, however, the exceptions. Most of us found it advisable to obtain

Blacksmith's Forge and Stonemason's Bench 7

our Saturday night and Sunday beer at the same house, so that the foreman must have found the custom from the shop a profitable affair. Such circumstances would be hard to find to-day; the trades-unions have changed all that, as well as the once common practice of paying wages in the public-house, which has now been made illegal.

About this time the second cholera epidemic broke out in England. Oxford did not escape the contagion, and our shop, being situated in a poor district by the river-side, became the centre of the plague's ravages. I can vividly recall the scenes of terrible wretchedness that took place round about the wharf where we were at work, as victim after victim was brought out of the houses by the plague authorities, and carried away to the temporary hospital on the outskirts of the town. Strangely enough, these scenes inspired me with no terror, and every day my father and I walked through the midst of the plague-stricken district to the scene of our labour. Amid such conditions I speedily passed through the stage of initiation into the stonemason's craft. My experience of those days convinces me that most lads will learn their father's trade quicker than any other; while a father naturally interests himself more in the advancement of his son than in that of one who is not related to him.

I continued to work in and about Oxford for two or three years, chiefly occupied in repairing and enlarging churches and colleges. I must turn aside

here to tell an amusing incident which occurred many years afterwards in connection with the university city. Some time after I had entered Parliament I remember having a conversation with dear old Sir John Mowbray, who represented Oxford from 1868 until his death in 1899. Our talk ran on the university, and on his remarking that I seemed to have a good deal of knowledge about the various colleges, I informed him that I had been at Christ Church. I shall never forget the look of bewildered incredulity that passed over his benevolent countenance, pain mingling with pity at the thought that I was trying to delude him into a belief that I had been a student at "The House." His relief was instantaneous and perceptible when I gently explained that my connection with Christ Church College was confined to the roof, where I had assisted in fixing a number of new chimney-pots.

I conceived a great affection for the old city which I have never lost. Its grey walls and ancient buildings were always a source of delight, and I would gaze with awe and wonderment at the great men in their caps and gowns as they paced the quiet quadrangles and the broad walks of the college gardens.

An incident which occurred during this period strongly impressed my mind with the necessity of some kind of technical instruction. I obtained employment at Wheatley some half-dozen miles from Oxford, where a new church was being built. By this time I had become fairly competent at my work, and greatly liked it. The first task set me was to work a huge block

of stone, weighing probably a ton or more, into a base to carry one of the columns of the church. The design was a square tapering to an octagon and finishing with a circle. The square and the circle offered no difficulties, but how to obtain eight equal sides was utterly beyond my comprehension. To add to my distress my work lay at some distance from the men in the shop, and I was under the constant surveillance of a hard-hearted and uncouth foreman. I only realised my difficulty between the breakfast- and dinner-hours, so that I could obtain no assistance from my mates. My perplexity reached the height of distress. I knew the foreman was no friend of my father, and therefore would give me but a short shrift if he found me in such a dilemma. I was also fully alive to the fact that if I took an undue time over the task my wages would suffer at the end of the week. How I prayed for the dinner-hour as the weary hours dragged by ! But all things have an end, and at last my opportunity came. The persuasive power contained in a pint of beer soon induced one of the masons to describe the procedure, which I realised in an instant, with amazement that I had not intuitively discovered the simple process for myself.

While on this point I may digress a moment in order to point out how different was the treatment meted out to a youth in the workyard in those days. Generally the language and manner of the men were coarse and brutal in the extreme. The man was never

recognised in the boy, who was regarded as created for the sole purpose of ministering to the fancies of his elders ; any lack of ready obedience brought down upon the victim's head a storm of abuse, not unfrequently accompanied by more substantial admonitions in the shape of kicks and cuffs.

CHAPTER II

"IN JOURNEYINGS OFTEN"

WITH the completion of the church at Wheatley began what I may call the third phase of my life. As every student of political economy is aware, there is a certain percentage of the industrial life of the nation which must be migratory in character by force of circumstances. Just as when you look into a kaleidoscope, after taking your fill of one pattern you give the instrument a turn, and the pieces of glass fall away into new positions, some scarcely moving, others covering a wide area before they find a fitting resting-place,—so in the sphere of labour the changes and chances of commercial life and the caprices of fashion keep a large army of working men in a state of motion, sometimes over short distances, sometimes from the southern counties to the western, or the eastern to the northern. Few men escape this experience ; my turn now arrived, and for five years I was like Cain, a wanderer on the face of the earth.

As I have said, the church at Wheatley was nearing completion, and the discharge of the hands in the mason's yard began. My turn soon came, and I found myself—a hobbledehoy—out of employment. All my

Henry Broadhurst

endeavours to get work in Oxford and the surrounding district failed. Business was slack, and masons were a drug in the market. So, as it happened in Robinson Crusoe's case, "my head began to be filled with rambling thoughts." I quickly made my decision to seek my fortune farther afield, and from that moment I never again permanently resided under my parents' roof. I started on my venture into this new life one Monday morning with high hopes and a cheerful countenance. The night before my foot had kicked against something in the pathway, and a patient search in the blackness of a pitch-dark night had been rewarded by the discovery of a rough purse full of coppers. I took this treasure-trove for a happy omen; and, indeed, before the end of the week I had found employment in the town of Buckingham. My life there, and subsequently at Banbury and in Bedfordshire, where I stayed nearly a year, passed uneventfully in the exercise of my trade.

About this period I paid my first visit to the Metropolis, where I found employment for a short time in the firm of George Myers & Son. Like all country-bred lads, I was astounded at the life and movement of London. The teeming masses of humanity rushing in all directions, bent, as it appeared to me, on getting clear of their neighbours, yet never succeeding in shaking off their pursuers, the roar of the streets, the glare of the lamps at night-time, inspired in me a curious mingling of fascination and distaste. The same conditions were reproduced in the workshop.

Above, below, and around me machines throbbed and whirled ceaselessly. The homely surroundings and social interests of country life had no existence here : life seemed a new thing, almost unearthly. I began to long for the sunlight on the quiet fields, the green hedgerows, and the music of the woods. Even the Houses of Parliament, with the great Clock Tower, my chief delight, could not compensate for the absence of the joys of rural life. A month's stay in modern Babylon was quite sufficient for me, and, gasping like a fish out of water, I set my face towards the open country.

After a week's wandering I found employment at a country house near Pangbourne, in Berkshire, a most delightful spot. The beauty of these new surroundings, and their contrast to the close air and grimy streets of London, inspired me with a strong desire to make a long stay here. Unfortunately, the work I was engaged upon was soon completed, and in a short time I found myself back in London. My return route lay through Reading and Windsor, and as I possessed a little money I made the journey by easy stages. In those days railway fares were much higher, and most working men, even though they had the means, regarded travelling by rail as an expensive luxury, only to be indulged in by the lazy and foolish. -

On my arrival in London I found that a firm of builders, Lucas Brothers, were in want of masons at Lowestoft, and that they were paying the passage

by sea to Great Yarmouth of employees engaged in London. Here was a chance offered which just suited me. I had never seen the sea, much less sailed upon its heaving breast. Accordingly, I found myself aboard a crazy old tub of a steamer pounding heavily down the Thames. Besides ordinary passengers, I found a number of other masons bound on the same errand as myself. In such company the day and night passed rapidly and jovially, and so liberally did I contribute my quota of the entertainment that when the steamer reached Great Yarmouth I had not a halfpenny to bless myself with. My companions were in no better case, so we had perforce to tramp to Lowestoft, though this proved less of a hardship than we expected, as the distance turned out to be only ten miles.

After a stay of a few months I left the coast and found my way to Norwich, little suspecting that my wanderings were to cease for some six years. My employer was a Mr. Lloyd, who had a thriving business in church erection and renovation and also in gravestones. He was a splendid master, and a bit of a character in his way. He insisted upon thorough accuracy and finish in all work done for him, with the natural consequence that in his "shops" was displayed some of the finest mason's work I have ever seen. I well remember my first conversation with him. I had asked him, as is usual in the trade, if he were in want of hands. He asked me what I was, and I replied, "A mason." Turning a

keen and searching glance on me, he suddenly rapped out in a grating voice, "Are you a mason, or only a man calling yourself a mason?" Somewhat taken aback, I assured him that I had gained my livelihood as a worker in stone for some years; and after a few moments' consideration he consented to give me a trial. Apparently he found his startling question satisfactorily answered by the manner in which I handled the chisel, for after eight hours' work he readily complied with my request for an advance of half a sovereign (two and a half day's wages), of which I stood in sore need.

In Mr. Lloyd's "shop" I spent some of the happiest days of my life. The wages were only twenty-four shillings a week of sixty hours. If you were late in the morning you forfeited a quarter of a day's pay, not, as is now the case, simply half an hour's or an hour's wages, according to the time lost. On the other hand, there were many compensations. Frequently I have taken a half-holiday without any deduction of wages, and as frequently I gave a few hours' work late at night or early in the morning without putting it down as overtime. It was a give-and-take system, and I am not far wrong in saying that I took a great deal more than I gave, though always with Mr. Lloyd's approval. I remember one autumn being in his yard six weeks without doing a stroke of really profitable work. Twice during that period I gave notice to leave, promising to return when work was found for me, but on neither occasion would my

generous employer listen to my request. Fortunately, when matters were beginning to look desperate orders came in, enabling me to make up for the period of inaction.

A particular feature of this firm was the friendly and indeed familiar relations of master and men. Mr. Lloyd was in special request for small repairs and rectifications in churches and country houses, which could only be carried out by a mason. Consequently, we were often obliged to drive a long distance to the scene of our labours. Many a score of miles did I travel with Mr. Lloyd in his little trap on such journeys, taking our lunch together in roadside inns and enjoying our pipes while the pony was baited. Pleasant times were these. Jack was as good as his master, and his master scorned to be better than Jack. Times have changed since then, and manners with them. The struggle for a living wage has put an end to the friendly relations often subsisting between employer and workman, and to-day I fear it would require a long and exhaustive search to discover such conditions of employment as I have described.

During a period of terrible depression in trade—I think it must have been the winter of 1858-9—I left the city of Norwich in search of work on what proved to be a disastrous journey. My time of setting out was not well chosen, but necessity knows no law. I started about the middle of December, only to return after nearly four months' absence, during which I

tramped about twelve hundred miles without succeeding in finding a single day's work. I directed my steps in a southerly direction, making Southampton and Portsmouth my goal. My reason for steering in that direction was that I had heard of the construction of the Royal Victoria Hospital at Netley, and that many hundreds of masons had found employment on the works. Unfortunately for me, the same idea had attracted many others out of work by reason of the slackness of trade, and I found the road swarming with men imbued with the hope of finding employment on the Government buildings. Alike in our hopes, we were also destined to be alike in our disappointment. When I arrived, footsore and weary, at Portsmouth, my boots refused to be held together any longer by string, or any other device of the mechanical mind, and utterly collapsed—like the famous "One-hoss Shay." The hard and flinty southern roads had done their work, and through the holes in the leather the stony places had inflicted wounds and sores on my feet. Faint, weary, with spirit broken, I knew not where to turn. Happily, in my hour of need I met some good Samaritans. They were fellow-masons who, tired of the weary search for non-existent work, had enlisted in the Militia Battalion of the Cheshire Regiment, called out for service at Portsmouth to replace the regular battalions decimated in the terrible Crimean War. Tolerably well fed, warmly clothed, and securely housed, ~~these~~ militiamen appeared the picture of prosperity and happiness.

They lent a ready ear to my necessities, and at their suggestion I entered my name on the sick-list of my trades-union, and obtained a week's lodging in its headquarters in that town. My militia friends generously guaranteed to provide me with food during that period. Accordingly, they proposed to their comrades in barracks that they should be allowed to introduce an old chum, fallen on evil times, to the mess, that he might share the bounties provided by the garrison commissariat. Tommy Atkins, true to his traditional character for good fellowship, agreed to the proposal with acclamation. I was at once installed in barracks, and, so far as meals were concerned, became a private in the Cheshire Militia. Discipline, especially in the militia, was much slacker in those days, and I had no difficulty in eluding the notice of the sergeants. For the time being I lived, as it seemed to me, like a lord, while the accumulation of my sick-pay (ten shillings a week) meant the possibility of new boots. With such a contrast as was afforded by my past destitution and misery and my present plenty and comfort, it was little wonder that the service of "the Widow at Windsor" presented an alluring prospect. Moreover, just at this time two of my militia friends were transferred, at their own request, to the Royal Engineers. The bounty received for this transaction was temptingly large. I resolved to don the scarlet tunic, and accordingly presented myself to the recruiting officer. But for some reason or other her Majesty was at the time not anxious to

avail herself of my services—I believe my height was below the standard ; so I was obliged to content myself with joining in the high jinks which accompanied the spending of the bounty received by my two friends.

Restored in health and spirits, not to mention shoe-leather, by my week's rest, I set out again on the tramp. I was at all times a good pedestrian, and I felt so full of life and vigour that I resolved to walk to Brighton in one day. The distance to be traversed was about fifty miles, and I had no misgivings about my power to accomplish it. But the fates were against me. I started from Portsmouth on a bright, wintry morning, the air keen with frost ; but before the lapse of an hour I walked into a storm of rain, which increased as the hours went on, until long before I reached Arundel I had not a dry thread on my body. Dragged down by the weight of my soaking clothes, the water squelching out of my boots at every step, I was only too glad to call a halt for the night at Arundel. I soon had reason to wish myself back in barracks, for the hostelry at which my slender resources permitted me to stay was not distinguished by its comforts, lacking especially a respectable fire to restore warmth to my rain-chilled frame and to dry my clothes. In fact, next morning, when I rose to resume my journey, some of my garments were almost as wet as when I took them off the night before. The rain had ceased in the night, and the damp weather had given place to frost. Welcome

as this keen, sparkling air was to a pedestrian, I soon discovered its disadvantages ; for before I had covered two miles of my day's journey every stitch of clothing I was wearing became as stiff as a board. So far as comfort went, I might as well have been arrayed in Greatheart's suit of mail.

Notwithstanding my impeding clothes, I made good progress, and arrived in Brighton at an early hour. A brew of hot tea and a chop sent me to bed in a happy frame of mind, believing my troubles were over, for the frost had every appearance of holding. When morning arrived I found I had reckoned without my host. The frost, gripping my sodden boots, had turned the leather to the consistency of cast iron. With great difficulty I got them on ; but when I came to walk, their unyielding surface chafed my feet sorely, reopening the wounds which had all but healed. Walking under these circumstances keenly tormented me ; but in spite of all I managed to cover the ground between Brighton and Tunbridge Wells in ten hours. The next day I walked into London ; lame and well-nigh exhausted, I thought the long New and Old Kent Roads would never come to an end, while Westminster Bridge appeared to my leaden limbs like a little mountain. I crawled past the Houses of Parliament, little thinking that their corridors and lobbies should one day become as familiar to me as any place on earth, until in Johnson Street, Westminster, I hailed with delight the masons' club-house, where I was entitled to four days' and nights' rest and the sum of one shilling per day.

I remained the prescribed period in London, and then, having been totally unsuccessful in my search for work, I once again set out upon the high-roads, and by devious routes found my way back to Norwich. As I have said above, my tramp had lasted nearly four months, a time of much suffering and considerable privations, and totally unrewarded by any work.

I think my readers would be interested if I turned aside for a moment to describe the conditions under which such a long tramp was possible to a man with scarcely any means. Before I started on this unfortunate journey I had been out of work for a week or two, so that my entire capital amounted to less than ten shillings, and I finished the tour with the sum of sixpence in my pocket. At no time during my progress did I possess more than ten shillings, and on many occasions I was without even a penny. My trades-union had relieving-stations in nearly every town, generally situated in one of the smaller public-houses. Two of the local masons are appointed to act as relieving-officer and bed-inspector. The duty of the latter is to see that the beds are kept clean, in good condition, and well aired, and the accommodation is much better than might be expected. When a mason on tramp enters a town, he finds his way to the relieving-officer and presents his card. On this card is written the applicant's name and last permanent address. In addition he carries a printed ticket bearing the stamp of the last lodge at which the traveller received relief. He was entitled to receive

a relief allowance of one shilling for twenty miles and threepence for every additional ten miles traversed since his last receipt of relief money. Thus, if fifty miles have been covered the man receives one-and-ninepence. In addition he is allowed sleeping accommodation for at least one night, and if the town where the station is situated is of considerable size, he is entitled to two or three nights' lodging. Besides a good bed, the proprietor of the official quarters is bound to furnish cutlery, crockery, and kitchen conveniences for each traveller, so that the relief money can all be spent on food. There is also no temptation to spend the small sum received on intoxicating drink, unless its recipient chooses to do so. The system is so perfect that it is a very rare occurrence for an impostor to succeed in cheating the union. Unfortunately, the stations did not exist everywhere, and when they were separated by forty or fifty miles—not a rare occurrence in the southern counties—the traveller's life became a hard one. I have frequently had to provide supper, bed, and breakfast on less than a shilling, so it may be readily imagined that my resting-places were never luxurious hotels. When I look back to those days, and compare my condition and surroundings with the present time, it is like a peep into the Dark Ages. During the whole of that tramp, and over all those hundreds of miles, I do not remember more than one occasion upon which I got a lift on the road. Even an ordinary drayman little cares to pick up for ever so short a distance any

person having the appearance which I presented at that period. But this was my last big tramp, and it was the longest lapse from employment that I have ever experienced in my life.

The hardships of these journeys in search of work were sometimes lightened in a less official manner. Members of my trade were always ready to relieve to the best of their power a distressed mason, provided he could prove his *bona fides*. The system worked something after this fashion. A man in search of employment, if a member of the trade society, always carried his card of membership in his pocket. As he went along he gathered the names and places, between town and town, where work was going on. It might be a public institution like an asylum, prison, or workhouse, or it might be a village church or a country mansion. The practice was to make one's way to these on the chance of obtaining work. If, however, no hands were wanted, a friendly gossip would ensue with one or more of the men in the shop. If there was a society man amongst them, he would ask whether you had your "card," and if this was produced it was an established custom for him to endeavour to collect what he could to assist you on your way. If it was nearing night-time, one or other of the masons would, in addition to the collection, offer you accommodation for the night, and send you off in the morning with such addition as his means or his mind might incline him to add to your possessions. Of course, if there was a relieving-station at hand

the official lodging-house would be your sleeping-place, except in the frequent instances where you would meet an old shopmate, who would insist upon your sharing his sleeping-quarters and sitting at his more liberally provided board. The probability was that you had previously offered the same hospitality to him or to some intimate friend under similar circumstances, or that you would be called upon to do so at a future time.

In the course of my wanderings I felt in with many men bent on the same search as myself, though belonging to different trades. Sometimes it would be a bricklayer, sometimes a tanner, and sometimes an engineer. If our goal was the same town or village, we would journey together as long as our ways lay in common. Whatever our callings might be, the member of the party who had met any luck seldom failed to publish the fact; and on several occasions I have either received or provided a homely but welcome meal. The old saying, "The best friends of the poor are the poor," was exemplified in my experience. I have a vivid recollection of reaching a town within fifty miles of London one cold Christmas Eve. I had a shilling to draw and two beds—*i.e.*, two night's lodging—to my credit, besides an extra shilling for Christmas Day. My pockets were entirely innocent of coin, so that I was obliged to exercise great frugality. Accordingly, I hit upon the obvious expedient of taking my Christmas cheer in a lump, combining dinner, tea, and supper in one meal. But the landlady of the inn—

good soul!—would have none of it. Nothing would satisfy her but that I should freely share in the good things of her own table. Many a time have I wished to meet again this kindly hostess who turned my semi-starvation into a feast of fat things.

The larger part of the next two or three years, until I became a permanent resident in the Empire City, I spent in Norwich. The intervals, when slackness of trade drove me forth, were passed entirely in the Eastern Counties, in Beccles, Ipswich, and Colchester. The first employment I obtained after my weary tramp cost me a painful experience. I was employed upon some stone steps worked out of what is called "Rag Portland." This is a rough stone full of little shells with knife-like edges. From long disuse of the chisel my hands had grown so soft and delicate that almost directly I set to work they became a mass of blisters, which quite disabled me for two or three days. With my straitened means a long rest meant starvation; so I had recourse to drastic treatment. First I dissolved a quantity of salt in warm water, and then, having pierced the blisters with a large needle, I held my hands in the water until the salt had soaked well into the wounds. A constant repetition of this treatment rendered me fit to resume work at the end of two days. After some unimportant changes, I obtained employment in the firm of Lucas Brothers, remaining with them until my removal to London.

From the very first I took a great liking for

Norwich, which the lapse of time did not diminish—in fact, I believe that had there been a wider choice of employment I should have settled down for life under the shadow of the cathedral. I found much solace and delight in the surrounding country; in particular the village of Thorpe appealed to me with ever fresh charms. I have always regarded it as the prettiest village in the country. The charming old church, the red-tiled houses, the green slopes running down to the river's edge, backed by high, wooded land, with Whitlingham in the foreground, all combine to produce a scene of exquisite peacefulness and beauty. Even to-day, after the lapse of forty years, I can never pass the view without renewed admiration.

During this long stay at Norwich the American Civil War was in progress. Amid the strong feeling of sympathy with the Confederates then prevailing in England, I well remember the power and energy with which Mr. Jacob Henry Tillett championed the cause of the Northern States in the columns of *The Norfolk News*. In later years I became personally acquainted with Mr. Tillett, and for a time we sat together in the House of Commons, enjoying frequent talks of old days in Norwich and the Eastern Counties.

A notable feature in the religious life of the city was the sixty minutes' afternoon service in St. Andrew's Hall, conducted by the Rev. Thomas Wheeler. Mr. Wheeler was a natural orator, possessing in a remarkable degree the ability to tell quaint and effective stories to illustrate his subject. I have never met another

man possessing such skill in enchainning the attention of an audience of children, a feat not over easy to compass.

At this time I lived every hour of my life ; I do not think the wealthiest or most exalted person in the land obtained half the joy from mere existence that I did.

CHAPTER III

EARLY DAYS IN LONDON

I THINK it was in 1865 that I removed to London. I quickly found work in a firm of sculptors, Farmer & Brindley. They were then engaged on the carving work in the block of Government offices adjoining Downing Street. I do not mean to imply that my engagement with this firm meant that I was in any sense competent to do carving work. My duty was to chisel down the rough blocks of stone as they were fitted in the building until they assumed the roughest outline of the intended decoration. Then the carver took up the work, shaping the stone in accordance with the artistic design until the finishing touches were given. The branch of masonry on which my energies were employed is called in the trade "roughing-out," and was a higher class of work than I had hitherto experienced. Masons engaged on this kind of work received a halfpenny or a penny per hour more than the wages paid for the mechanical labour in the workshop, besides other little advantages of no interest to the public. Spurred by an ambition to improve my prospects, I conceived the idea of myself becoming

a carver, and to this intent I bought some cheap books containing sketches of ornamental work in foliage and the like on one page, with a blank sheet opposite for copying. The study interested me greatly, and for some time I persevered in my intention ; but ultimately I grew tired of the work, which involved considerable exposure to the weather, for nearly all the carving had to be done upon the building itself, and not in the workshop.

The last straw, however, which led to my final resolution not to continue in this branch of the trade was my employment on the Houses of Parliament. For a considerable interval I had been working in the "shop" of my old employers, George Meyer & Sons, who were carrying out some decorative work on the Guildhall. Tempted by the superior rate of payment I returned to "roughing-out" under Mr. Herp, who had received the contract for the carving work on the Clock Tower and the new corridor which joined it to the main buildings of the Houses of Parliament. The time of year was November, and the north-east wind blowing up the river made my task a cruel one. At times the bitter blast would numb my hands until it was impossible to hold a chisel. My very bones would be penetrated with its icy edge until I felt as if clothed in a garment of lace. Little wonder that I gladly went back to the mason's shop, where some shelter, at least, was afforded.

From this period till the end of 1872 I was employed by many different firms. My old acquaintance

with ecclesiastical stonework was renewed by my engagement with a firm of church decorators in Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square. They worked both in stained glass and the stonework in church interiors—communion tables and altars, altar rails, fonts, pulpits, and so on. They had business connections with the Continent and also with the United States, but the bulk of their productions was supplied to English customers. This class of work possessed great interest to those engaged in it and demanded considerable skill, though scarcely as much as the uninitiated would imagine. There was also a third department, in which mosaic and incised work was carried on. The partners were young men of exceptional abilities, and but for unfortunate circumstances I am convinced they would have attained the position of one of the leading firms in the world. Subsequently I was employed upon many of the best-known buildings in London, and traces of my workmanship might be found in Westminster Abbey, the Albert Hall, St. Thomas's Hospital, Burlington House, the Guildhall, and the aristocratic residences in Grosvenor Place, Grosvenor Gardens, and Curzon Street, Mayfair, though I am certain that the prolonged and minute search necessary to find such traces would not be rewarded by any startling artistic discovery.

The even tenor of my life was now broken by the first considerable Labour dispute in which I had taken a part. In the spring of 1872 the men engaged in the building trades agitated for a reduction in the

working hours and an increase of one penny per hour in their wages. The union officials had given the usual six months' notice to the employers, the period to expire in the month of May; but the employers decided to anticipate a strike, and locked the men out. The result was a month of enforced idleness. I was elected chairman of the lock-out movement in my own trade. Rarely, I suppose, in the history of Labour disputes was a lock-out conducted on a more amicable basis. No breaches of the law occurred, and so quiet was everything that scarcely anyone save those interested in it was aware of its existence.

Ultimately, a conference was agreed upon, consisting of a committee of the Masons' Society (of which I was a member), and an equal number of representatives of the Master Builders' Association. The joint committee was presided over by Mr. Hannen, the brother of the late Lord Hannen; and the chief figures on the employers' side were Mr. Charles Lucas, and Mr. Bird, the secretary of their association. After two meetings the conference drew up the conditions of the resumption of work. They consisted of an immediate advance of a halfpenny per hour, a further advance of the same amount to be conceded in the following year if trade was good, and the reduction of the hours of work from fifty-six and a half to fifty-two and a half per week for nine months in the year, and to forty-seven for the remaining three months. One

signal advantage gained was that work should cease at noon on Saturdays. Under the system then in force work was continued on Saturdays till one o'clock, an hour after the usual dinner-hour. A serious consequence of this custom was that the men frequently celebrated the end of the week's work with a glass of beer, and, imbibing it on an empty stomach an hour after their usual meal-time, rapidly became intoxicated. Nothing succeeds like success, and the practical capitulation of the masters on the men's terms induced many employers who had hitherto refused to recognise the Masons' Society to change their policy; some firms even going so far as to instruct their foremen to give the preference in taking on new hands to members of the society.

This was my last experience of direct responsibility for the conduct of a trade dispute, not greatly to my sorrow, for during the progress of the lock-out and the conference I conducted all the negotiations on behalf of the masons. I had to attend all the meetings, speaking on occasion several times during the day, and always confronted with the dread of doing or saying anything that might increase the differences of the contending parties. It was rarely before midnight that I reached home, worn-out with worry and fatigue; and for fulfilling this important office I received only a shilling a day more than those who took no active part in the proceedings beyond drawing their strike-pay. How little the superior critic of the Labour world knows of the

circumstances under which those who are sometimes called "unscrupulous agitators" gain for their fellows a fair reward for their labours! I do not mean to imply that I was the only prominent representative of the men affected by this lock-out. On the contrary, the leaders of the allied trades—the brick-layers, carpenters, etc.—were entitled to quite as much credit for the successful ending of the dispute and the furthering of the cause of Labour. But I have not alluded specifically to them because I desire to confine myself strictly to those affairs in which I had a personal interest.

It must not be supposed that my failure to proceed far with the free-hand drawing studies, which would have qualified me for the higher branches of my trade, arose from laziness. The fact is that I was becoming more and more immersed in trades-union interests, and this course gradually led me into the political arena. Soon after my settlement in London I became attached to a political organisation called a "Working Men's Association," and I also joined the Reform League. The labour of organising in connection with the trades-union and the political delegations in which I was interested were peculiarly congenial to my temperament and aspirations; but of course they left me no spare time for study. Those were stirring times in both spheres of activity—vast processions, great demonstrations organised by the united trade and political associations; and only those in the inner circle can realise what self-sacrifice and

arduous labour working men who took an interest in the advancement of their class were called upon to endure, and all, be it remembered, without monetary reward. The sole incentives were ardent convictions and a deep sense of patriotism. I think I was present on all the great demonstrations of this time, generally in the character of a delegate of my trades-union. I remember particularly the long march from the Mall, past Marlborough House, to the great field at Fulham, through drenching rain and seas of mud on a bleak wintry day, when the men of London met to demand that extension of the franchise which was eventually conceded in the Reform Act of 1867. Equally vivid is my recollection of the vast procession through the West End of London to the Agricultural Hall at Islington. I took part, too, in the memorable occasion of the pulling down of the Hyde Park railings.

Concerning this great demonstration, which was forbidden to enter Hyde Park at the whim of the Tory Government, I must enter into rather more detail, because, although my personal experiences of this eventful day were not particularly striking, the whole business contains an element of dramatic interest, and marks an epoch in that struggle for liberty and free speech which reactionary rulers have vainly endeavoured to crush. The affair arose out of the rejection of the Franchise Bill. The Reform League determined to hold a gigantic mass meeting in Hyde Park to protest against the Government's

action. Due notice of this intention was given to the police, when, like a bolt from the blue, the Home Secretary, Mr. Spencer Walpole, blankly refused permission for the meeting to be held in the Park. A considerable discussion in the newspapers followed ; great indignation was everywhere expressed against this obscurantist and tyrannical action, and the leaders of the League determined to pursue their intention, despite the official prohibition. Accordingly, on the day fixed—May, 1866—two processions were formed and marched to the Park. The first was led by Mr. Beales, the President of the Reform League, and it is interesting to recall that two of his companions were Professor Thorold Rogers (who represented the Oxford Reform League) and Mr. G. J. Holyoake. This procession started at six o'clock in the morning from the offices of the League in Adelphi Terrace, and proceeded by way of Regent Street to Hyde Park Corner. At Oxford Circus its numbers were swelled by a large contingent from the Holborn Branch, who were preceded by a brass band and a large tricolour of red, green, and blue. Amid the jeers, the laughter, and the cheers of the spectators who lined the streets in large numbers and filled every window on the route, the immense procession moved forward towards the gates of the Park. So vast were the numbers that when the leading carriage was traversing Bond Street the rear rank had not left Holborn. Meanwhile, tremendous preparations had been made to bar the way of this great multitude into the Park. Before

the Hyde Park Corner gates, the Marble Arch gates, and in the immediate vicinity, over sixteen hundred constables, mounted and on foot, were stationed.

The scene about Hyde Park Corner when the carriages of the Reform Leaguers reached the spot was extraordinary. Barricades of omnibuses were on every side; the carriages of the wealthy blocked the way; and right across the entrance to the Park was drawn a double line of mounted constables. Behind them stood a crescent-shaped line of foot-police. The leading carriage of the demonstration was driven up to where the police were stationed, and its occupants descended and, surrounded by the Holborn contingent, walked up to the gates. Their progress was checked by an inspector of police, who informed Mr. Beales that he could not enter the Park, by order of the Commissioners. Some little scuffles between police and demonstrators took place here and there, and then Mr. Beales and his comrades remounted their carriage and proceeded to Trafalgar Square, where they addressed a huge meeting from the base of Nelson's Monument.

It had been arranged that the members of the Clerkenwell Branch of the League should assemble on the Green and march to the Marble Arch, and there join forces with the other branches. A procession of several thousands followed the band, and before Oxford Street was reached the union with other demonstrators had swelled their numbers to at least fifteen thousand. Banners of all hues fluttered

in the air, the men tramped steadily to the music of the bands, and the whole scene, except for the absence of glittering arms and uniforms, resembled the orderly progress of a disciplined army rather than a hastily arranged procession of civilians. From one of the banners the portrait of Gladstone smiled his approval on the crowded ranks; beneath it ran the appropriate motto, "Gladstone and Liberty: An Honest Man's the Noblest Work of God." A companion banner bore the effigy of John Bright, with the inscription, "John Bright: Manhood Suffrage."

Nearing the Marble Arch soon after seven, all kinds of rumours concerning the police and the other demonstration met them. Some said the gates had been thrown open by the police, others asserted that the police had been overcome and the gates forced by the crowd. But when the head of the procession reached the Marble Arch they were confronted by firmly closed gates and a strong cordon of constables before them. Some part of the procession passed on in the direction of the Bayswater Road, but the greater number turned down Park Lane with the intention of trying the Hyde Park Corner entrance.

It was just at this moment that my own experiences of the demonstration began. I was working for Farmer & Brindley at the time on the Foreign Office in Downing Street, then in the course of construction. Anxious to take some part in the projected gathering in Hyde Park, I hurried home to Pimlico as soon

as my work was done, and reached Hyde Park Corner at seven. Great masses of workmen were hastening to the same spot from Westminster and Lambeth, and so formed a large body of reinforcements. Finding the police in possession of the gates, we edged round into Park Lane. Here a scene of indescribable confusion and tumult prevailed. The narrowness of the thoroughfare, the pressure of the demonstrators from the Marble Arch, increased by the sympathisers and onlookers from Hyde Park Corner, turned the Lane into a huge, swaying, shouting mob. Luckily, I fell in with a squad of my own shop-mates, and keeping well together we managed to protect ourselves from injury. A curious incident occurred just as we left Piccadilly. A hansom cab drove past, whose two occupants were accompanied by a big, black retriever dog. Either from love of sport or incited by its master, this dog suddenly leaped from the cab and made a dash at us. One of our number, a brawny, North Country mason, met the attack with a blow of his fist, which caught the brute just under the jaw, and, as Bret Harte puts it, "the subsequent proceedings interested him no more." If the men in the cab had not hastily bidden their driver to put on full speed ahead they would have shared the fate of their dog, for the feeling of exasperation had risen higher and higher till the crowd was in just the mood which, if provoked too rudely, leads to desperate deeds and revolutions.

The vast crowd surged this way and that, endeavouring

to find an outlet ; every instant seemed to threaten wholesale suffocation unless the pressure were relaxed. Suddenly the iron railings bent and cracked, either from the exertion of intentional force by some active spirits or else from the unpremeditated and irresistible movement of the crowd. The barriers down, a vast body of men poured through the breaches, many injuries were received, and the police, hearing of the occurrence, came tumbling up from the main gates and charged the struggling mass with drawn truncheons. They might as well have charged the Falls of Niagara. Mrs. Partington confronting the Atlantic with her broom was not a more ludicrous picture. They belaboured the front ranks with their batons, but were swept aside like flies before the waiter's napkin. The cries of distress, the angry shouts, the hoarse voices of the constables, and the tramping of thousands of feet filled the air with a confused din utterly beyond description. I did not see any actual personal violence done, but I could hear the angry noises which denote rough work in my immediate vicinity. One man was carried out on a stretcher, his head a mass of wounds from the truncheon of a constable ; six persons received severe injuries, and were taken to St. Mary's Hospital ; and for many weeks after this eventful day I used to see the constables about King Street Police Station with their arms in slings and their heads in bandages.

Soon after the crowd entered the Park a meeting was convened, and resolutions denouncing the action of the Tory Government were passed. Of this I saw

and heard nothing, for my attention was centred on a more exciting subject. Finding themselves overpowered, the police sent for assistance, and presently, above the heads of the crowd, I could discern the plumes of the Horse Guards Blue and the dark bearskins of the Foot Guards. Two companies of the latter and two troops of the cavalry, under Colonel Lane-Fox, composed this force. The soldiers received quite an ovation from the people in the Park. Cries of "Three cheers for the Guards—the people's Guards!" were raised and warmly taken up. There must have been quite two hundred thousand demonstrators in the Park, and the spectacle as the Household troops advanced, followed by the Grenadiers with fixed bayonets, was a striking one. Amid loud and prolonged cheers the soldiers marched and wheeled and marched again; but the crowd seemed quite confident that there would be no firing and no resort to cold steel. The commanding officer possessed more discretion than the Home Secretary, otherwise Peterloo might have been re-enacted on a hundredfold larger scale. But after watching the soldiers for a short time the crowd gradually and without uproar dispersed, and the Park was left in quiet. For myself, I had gone home some time before without having sustained any more serious injury than a bruised arm and a sore spot or two on my feet, where the enthusiasm of the crowd had got the better of me. /

Those were years of extraordinary exertion, making heavy demands upon one's physical strength. During

the whole of this period I scarcely ever lost a single hour's work in the morning, though I seldom retired to bed before midnight, and was always up again at 4.30 a.m. Nearly all my work as a delegate was entirely gratuitous ; occasionally, indeed, I received a shilling a day when engaged on behalf of my trades-union, but this sum never sufficed to remunerate me for my out-of-pocket expenses, such as cost of travelling and similar outlay. The scanty leisure which my employment left me was divided between the affairs of my trades-union and the Reform Movement. Thus I gradually became deeply engrossed in political and Labour questions. It was difficult to distinguish between the two, for those were the days when men began to concentrate the political power of the trades-unions, and to bring it to bear upon Parliament to secure reforms in the laws relating to Labour and trade combination. This absorption in what I may call, for want of a better term, public life at length grew so great as to demand all my energies. In September, 1872, I was appointed delegate of the Stonemasons' Society to the Trades-Union Congress, and at the Congress I was elected a member of the Parliamentary Committee. A month later my employment on the Curzon Street works came to an end, and from that time I bade a final adieu to the stonemason's bench.

My appointment as delegate and my election to the Parliamentary Committee were a recognition of activity in my own Union. After the passing of the

Franchise Act of 1867 I had largely devoted my energies to committee work in the Stonemasons' Society. My personal experiences had taught me the necessity of many changes in the Union rules. It is part of our constitutional practice that the rules should be open to revision every three years; and accordingly, at the due time, I brought forward several proposals. In the face of much opposition I succeeded in carrying a resolution that this revision of rules should be conducted by a committee of delegates from every district, elected for this purpose. I next proposed the establishment of a Superannuation Fund, by which a small pension was to be granted to men who had been members of the Union for a minimum number of years on condition, not of the attainment of a certain age, but of certified inability longer to pursue the trade of mason. The amount of this pension was decided by the number of years during which the recipient had been a member of the Union. After a struggle extending over several years this proposal was also added to the statute-book of the Union. I then turned my attention to the question of allowances to the unemployed. My experience of the tramping system led me to the conclusion that the search for employment on foot from county to county, often continued over a long period, was liable to develop in men of weak character permanent demoralisation, and to instil a distaste of settled life. While not desirous of putting hindrances in the way of a man's leaving his home to find fresh employ-

ment elsewhere, I was convinced that he ought not to be compelled to go on the tramp in order to make himself eligible for relief. I therefore advocated a system of small weekly allowances for a limited period to men out of employment, payable in the town where the applicant resided. Although this reform was not immediately carried out, its eventual success was well assured ; and I believe the scheme has worked out without substantial injury to or fraud upon the funds of the Union.

But I was not satisfied with these changes. In those days the Central Lodge, which formed the executive government of the Union, was not permitted to remain in one town for a longer period than three years. As the members of the lodge were perforce local masons, this rule meant that, with the exception of the secretaries, every third year saw a new executive called into existence. Such a system could not but be highly detrimental to the interests of the Union, as I succeeded in proving to the majority of the members. After some discussion we resolved that the headquarters of the Union should be permanently fixed in London, an innovation which has proved highly beneficial. For a time I occupied the position of Chairman of the Central Committee. The chairman, it must be understood, had no emoluments attached to his position beyond those received as a member of the Central Committee—*viz.*, one shilling for each meeting attended. This sum, in an era when plentiful tramcars and cheap omnibus rides

were unknown, frequently fell short of the expenditure necessary to reach the place of meeting. During my chairmanship, after frequent failures, I succeeded in inducing the Central Committee to exercise executive powers. I was moved to do this by the conviction that with a firmer control from the central body many strikes in various parts of the country might be prevented, while others would be considerably shortened. Employers and their representatives were then, and I have no doubt are still, too apt to treat their own workmen with very little consideration, often displaying an unreasonable repugnance to talk over what the men consider to be grievances. This failure to observe the minor courtesies of life is equally shared by the men, so far as my observation goes. I reasoned that if an outside body, exempt from local prejudices, could intervene and act as a go-between, interviewing masters and men, the causes of dispute might frequently be adjusted without having recourse to the extreme measure of a strike. In course of time I impressed my conviction on the committee, and it was agreed to add this executive function to its duties.

The first occasion on which this new departure came into operation was in connection with a strike at the Avonmouth Docks. The Central Committee received a telegram announcing the sudden cessation of work by a large number of masons, and requesting, in the name of an improvised strike committee, the immediate dispatch of a sum of money wherewith to pay a

strike allowance. The cost to the Mason's Society would have amounted to nearly £100 a week during the continuance of the strike, and the payment of the first week's allowance would have intensified the difficulty of a settlement. The General Secretary in London immediately summoned a special meeting of the Central Committee, which promptly appointed two of its members to investigate the case and report upon it to the committee. I was one of those chosen for this mission. Early next morning we proceeded to the scene of action, and at once summoned a meeting of the men and heard their complaints. Accompanied by a delegation of the masons we next proceeded to the docks; a brief conference with the contractor and the chief engineer followed, ending in the adjustment of the differences and the resumption of work the following morning.

My next experience of conciliation work was less satisfactory. Curiously enough, the scene of operations was in the same district, but on the other side of Bristol. A strike had been proceeding for six weeks when I, with other members of the Central Committee, went down to try to bring the dispute to a close. When we arrived in the neighbourhood we found among the men a widespread spirit of antagonism to our mission. To such an extent did this spirit exist that threats of violence if we dared to visit the works were freely indulged in. On the principle that threatened men live long, we paid little heed to these menaces and proceeded with our task. But the

stubbornness of the men baffled all our efforts at conciliation. Had their persistency been exercised in a better cause it would have been magnificent ; under the circumstances it was merely fatuous. On the other hand, the employer displayed an unusually reasonable spirit, readily expressing his willingness to submit the whole question to arbitration. He even went so far as to agree that our Central Committee should act as the court of arbitrators, offering to pay a handsome subscription to the Bristol Hospital if we found him in the wrong, on condition that if the judgment went against the men they should subscribe a donation to the same institution. But nothing would induce the men to submit to arbitration. At a mass meeting of the men we warned them that our report to the Central Committee might lead to the cessation of their strike pay, but all to no effect. The threats of violence were not executed, but the strike went on. On receipt of our report the committee gave them a week's notice to close the strike, and at the expiration of the limit cut off supplies, with the result that soon after the men came to terms with their employer.

In the third case which I shall chronicle our presence was equally unpleasing to the men, but terminated with a happier result. Like the preceding one, this strike, which took place in a town in the north of England, had lasted six weeks when the Central Committee intervened. I, with another member, was again appointed to institute an inquiry into the causes

of the dispute. The General Secretary telegraphed to the men on strike to arrange a meeting in readiness to receive us, and he also asked the employer to be within reach in case we wanted to see him. When we arrived we found the men assembled, but their attitude was anything but reassuring. Before the meeting had proceeded far we were threatened with expulsion from the room. Both of us, however, had had plenty of experience of the value of such threats at similar gatherings, so they had little effect on us. We persevered in our mission, with the result that, having arrived on Saturday afternoon at four o'clock, we made such headway in establishing a line of communication between contractor and workmen that on the following Tuesday work was resumed. A fortnight later these very men who had received us with strong opposition sent a vote of thanks to the Central Committee, acknowledging the great services rendered by us, and expressing regret that our visit had not been made at an earlier period of the dispute.

During this period of my life I became greatly interested in a co-operative experiment. After the quieting down of the political agitation for reform in 1867 Mr. Alfred Walton, a retired clerk of the works in the building trade and a stonemason by training, gave a series of addresses to the building trades and operatives of London in favour of Co-operative Building Societies. The theory was a sound one and the object most desirable. After prolonged effort

and the expenditure of much labour a start was made to put Mr. Walton's theory into practice. A company was formed, a board of directors appointed, and business premises taken in the Euston Road. The directorate consisted of representatives of various branches of building trades, and I was a member of the board. Several of my colleagues were men of exceptional ability and large experience, both as experts in estimates and in quantity taking. We began by tendering for small contracts, but met with little success. The premises we had hired were the property of the Aerated Bread Company, and fortunately this company was able to supply us with a considerable amount of repairing work in their various premises in London. Had we been content to confine ourselves to this class of work, which soon became sufficient to make it profitable, until we had established the concern on a firm basis, I believe the company might have grown into a permanent institution. Unfortunately, the sin by which the angels fell wrought our ruin. We succeeded in obtaining a contract for more ambitious work in the shape of the erection of a mission-hall and schools in St. John's Wood. Paradoxical as it may sound, this success proved a disaster. For some time the enthusiasm of our shareholders had been gradually evaporating. To carry out building operations capital is an absolute necessity, but more capital the shareholders apparently had no intention of supplying. Having obtained the contract, we called a meeting of shareholders for the purpose of appealing to them to

pay up arrears. Very few attended beyond the directors ; but the contract had already been signed, and we were compelled to proceed. We had recourse to all the expedients we could think of, except borrowing money at a high rate of interest. Each of the directors, in addition to paying up the full value of his shares, advanced money from time to time according to his means to meet the company's expenses. A serious source of inconvenience and loss was the fact that merchants would not extend to us the same credit which they granted to private building firms.

Our theory was to employ the shareholders as far as possible on the company's work. The managing director, who lived on the premises in Euston Road, was a workman of superior education, with a high ideal of the future of Labour ; but I had more than once harboured a suspicion that his practice fell far short of his preaching, and doubted his industry and close application to his duties. All the directors were men who had to work from ten to twelve hours a day at their trade, so that it was impossible for them to take an active part in the direction and management of the building operations in St. John's Wood, which were of necessity left to the entire control of the managing director. None of the directors except the manager received any fee for his services. Most of us lived at least two or three miles from Euston Road, and the directors' meetings usually kept us from home till midnight, while we were obliged to be up next morning at a very early hour. Under these circum-

stances it will be recognised how impossible it was for the board to exercise personal oversight on the works. But a time came when some of the directors felt that the works were not progressing as rapidly as might reasonably be expected, and suspicion arose that the fault lay at the door of the managing director. So strongly was I impressed with this view of the matter that out of my working time, which of course meant a considerable loss to me, I determined to pay a surprise visit to the works. I left my home at 4.15 one morning, and arrived at the works before 6. I immediately secreted myself in a favourable position, where I could not be observed, but from which I could see all that passed. Six o'clock was the time for commencing work ; but when a neighbouring clock chimed the hour, out of thirty men engaged on the building operations less than half were ready to begin. Some arrived ten minutes late, others were twenty minutes behind time ; while the managing director, who should have been there without fail to blow the whistle at six o'clock, turned up half an hour late. His consternation at my sudden appearance is not easily imagined. I will pass over the scene that followed ; suffice it to say that I had discovered one big leak in our good ship, and hastened to lay my discovery before a special meeting of the board. Unhappily, my exposure came too late ; for when the building was at length completed we were reduced to bankruptcy, and the company on which we had set such sanguine hopes was wound up. For my part,

I lost not only my share capital and the money I had advanced at various times to meet pressing calls, but three years of hard work at the sacrifice of much individual comfort.

Such was my first and last personal experience of productive co-operation, and in truth it was a desperate venture. All the influence of the trades interested in building was dead against us; obstacles real and artificial barred our way at every turn. Yet I am convinced that had the remnant of that board of directors joined together to carry on the business as a private venture, there was amongst them sufficient ability, energy, and experience to have made the undertaking a success in the long run.

I think this is a favourable opportunity to digress a little from the high-road of my narrative in order to dwell upon the wide contrast between the present condition of the working class and that which existed in the early fifties, conditions which I clearly remember in my own experience. The great strides made in every point of life—working-hours, wages, education, quality of food and clothing—amount to little short of a revolution. To take the question of food, in my early boyhood my mother has often given me a shilling to purchase a four-pound loaf, and the change out of the shilling only amounted to twopence and occasionally a penny. Its quality was equivalent to loaves baked of the flour doled out to persons in receipt of outdoor relief, coarse enough to turn the stomachs of even the poorest.

Sugar was a luxury indulged in only on rare occasions ; farm labourers and other poorly paid workers frequently flavoured their cup of tea with a pinch of salt. Fresh meat was then a rare event on the table of the ordinary labourer. In clothing we fared no better ; our garments were coarse and uncomfortable. Portions of the workaday dress of a stonemason were composed of materials not found now even in the cheapest slop-shops ; yet these poor garments were frequently used for Sunday wear before they descended to workshop service.

The status of Labour has advanced with equal strides, for where now the employee may meet his employer on equal terms at the Arbitration or Conciliation Board, in my early years Labour had practically no rights and no recognition. The natural outcome of this neglected condition was degraded habits, brawling, and drunkenness ; for however widespread and deplorable the insobriety of the working class may still be, there is no comparison with the drinking habits of fifty years ago. As I have said in an earlier chapter, it was quite a common occurrence for the foreman of the works to be a licensed victualler also. As in the majority of cases the foreman acted as paymaster, it is not a matter of surprise that wages were paid over the bar of his public-house. We can scarcely be surprised that the men who received their pay thus readily believed the best way to propitiate the foreman and retain their employment was to spend freely on his liquors. Work did not cease then as

it does now at midday on Saturday ; usually the time of leaving was very little earlier than on the other days of the week. This fact combined with the custom described above mostly resulted in the wage-earner's arriving home in a state of intoxication, before the housewife could manage to obtain any of his hard-earned money for the satisfaction of the domestic needs. Sometimes, indeed, an energetic wife would meet her husband outside the works ; but even then she had to accompany him to the public-house where the wages were handed over. Consequently, she too would have her glass, often with the gravest results to her sobriety and good name. When I look back upon the revolting sights witnessed in my boyhood, wherein both men and women took part, some of the worst of the cases happening almost under the garden wall of a bishop's palace, I look upon the present condition of my fellows with a lively sense of thankfulness. To maintain that the world is not moving upwards, notwithstanding temporary checks and drawbacks, is to ignore demonstrated facts.

This optimistic view must not be taken as indicating any lack of knowledge of or sympathy with the lamentable condition of the seething masses of poverty-stricken and neglected beings still to be found in our great centres of industry, and forming a constant menace to our common well-being. But practical Socialism has made vastly greater progress in this country than anywhere else in the world ; and in all probability Great Britain will continue to lead in

the van. I believe it to be the duty of every civilised nation to regard all her citizens as a father looks after the children of his household, giving all, as far as possible, equal opportunities for betterment, and providing for an old age of peace and freedom from anxiety. The present system of treating all applicants for relief alike, differentiating in no way between the meritorious and the incurably idle, borders on criminal neglect. To the latter class the Poor Laws have no terrors or shame ; to the deserving they are cruel almost to death. I am far from believing that the wealthy desire that the poor shall pass their declining years herded together in barrack life. But if only they could be induced to share for a few days the lot of their poor brethren they would, I am sure, willingly make sacrifices to provide a more acceptable refuge for the wounded in the great battle of competition.

Another respect in which the amelioration of the lot of the working classes is conspicuous is in the means of transit. Upon this subject I must confine my comparisons to the metropolitan area. Though the tremendous growth of London has outpaced the capacities of the railways, still, those who remember the condition of affairs as recently as forty years ago have seen a wonderful improvement. When I first came to live permanently in London there was no Underground Railway, while bus fares were fifty and sometimes seventy per cent. higher than at present. The great system of tramways,

binding the north, south, and east with the centre of the metropolis, and affording the working classes a cheap and comfortable mode of transit, was utterly unknown.

During the years I lived in Pimlico I worked for some time on a new police-station in Worship Street, which meant a walk of at least one and a quarter hours. As this was on paving-stones which soon tire the feet, I had to allow an additional ten to fifteen minutes for a rest before beginning work. Thus I was compelled to leave my house at 4.30 a.m. At night it was possible to obtain a bus ride part of the way, but the charges were quite beyond the means of a workman.

One of the greatest dangers to the health of the worker who has a long distance to walk to his work is the risk of getting wet in the early hours of the morning without an opportunity of changing his clothes until work is ended and home regained at night. Many times in my mason's life I have begun my day of ten or twelve hours in soaking garments, shivering with damp and misery. The Underground Railway has changed all that ; and though I am not unmindful of the constant complaints made by workers against the London railway companies—often with much justice—still, I feel certain these complaints would be robbed of much of their bitterness had those who make them the experience of the tribulations we endured in my early London days.

The first section of the Underground Railway was not opened till 1863. In 1870 the line from Blackfriars to South Kensington was constructed. In 1871 it was extended to the Mansion House, and in 1875 to Bishopsgate Street. The circle was not completed till 1884. Innumerable extensions have been and are still being made in this mode of transit. To-day a working man can travel fifteen miles on the Metropolitan and District Railways for twopence, nineteen miles for fourpence, and twenty-eight miles for sixpence. In 1897 the two underground railways issued something like ten millions of cheap tickets, representing a total of twenty million passengers. These tremendous figures are, of course, exclusive of the working class passengers carried by the suburban trains of the great aboveground companies, which, roughly speaking, carry an additional twelve or thirteen millions at cheap rates in the twelve months.

Taking all means of transit into consideration, I am inclined to believe that the worker of to-day has secured an additional hour a day for himself as compared with the worker of 1870—a most substantial advantage, without reckoning the saving in pocket and the better preservation of his health.

Of all the larger railway companies which feed London the Great Eastern Railway is the most conspicuous in its relation to the working classes, not only because of the immense numbers—enough to make up a respectably sized provincial town—it daily brings into and carries away from London, but because it

was the pioneer in the matter of issuing cheap tickets. Cheap tickets were first issued to workpeople on this line in 1871, but only in a very restricted fashion. To-day a workman can buy a packet of six return tickets for sixpence on Saturday or Monday for the ensuing week. In 1896 more than five and a half millions of these cheap tickets were issued, as compared with 902,556 in 1874. The same railway now issues another grade of cheap tickets for the use of clerks, shopmen, and warehousemen. These tickets cost half the ordinary return fare with a minimum of fourpence, and are available immediately after the departure of the last workmen's trains, arriving at the London termini not later than 8 a.m. In 1890 1,855,460 persons availed themselves of this concession; in 1896 the number increased to 3,964,517—a marvellous increment!

As regards present-day problems I am entirely in favour of the municipalisation of tramways, and rejoice in the County Council's acquirement of this form of transit. If it were found practicable, I would equally support the State ownership of railways. At any rate, I consider that serious inquiry might be made into the possibility of the purchase by the State of the Metropolitan and District Railways. This suggestion cannot be termed extreme, and its comparatively limited responsibility is not calculated to alarm the apprehensions and excite the strenuous opposition of those averse to State ownership. Indeed, I conceive it to be one of the essentials for solving

the vitally important question of over-crowding than that the State and the municipal authorities should join hands in controlling the transport of the vast army of workers who find employment in the heart of the Empire City.

CHAPTER IV

MY POLITICAL CAREER BEGINS

MY entry into the arena of political strife was gradual, but I think I may fairly reckon the year 1872 as the real starting-point in my political career. I have already said that in November of that year I finally ceased to work at my trade. As it happened to be winter-time, I did not hurry myself to obtain a fresh engagement, but preferred to take a week or two's rest in the cold, dark days of a London November. But his Satanic Majesty did not find a client in me ; my holiday was spent in change of occupation rather than in idleness.

The success which had attended the movement for higher wages and shorter hours in the building trade had given an impetus to the Labour cause generally, more especially in the metropolitan district. Among the various branches of the industrial army encouraged to place their affairs on a better footing were the gas-stokers of the South of London Gas Works. They were agitating for a reduction of their working hours, and I was approached by one of their number, a man named Webster, for advice in the task of organising their forces ; indeed, the stokers repeatedly invited

me to place myself at the head of their movement. But this I refused to do, insisting that they would be better served by a man of their own craft who knew the ins and outs of the business, and who would thus be better qualified to understand their desires and give effect to them. At the same time, I assured their representatives that I should be glad at any critical moment to give them advice, should they apply for it. The movement made rapid progress for a time, but the men became excited, and showed signs of taking the bit between their teeth. Perceiving their state of mind, I repeatedly warned them against extreme measures, especially against anything in the nature of a strike, for their Union was almost destitute of funds and entirely lacking in experience of Labour disputes. Unfortunately, some of the wilder spirits managed to secure control of the organisation and at once rushed to extremes. The consequence was a partial strike, followed by a prosecution; the strike completely collapsed in a few days, and what under abler guidance and more cautious procedure might have grown into a strong and permanent association, fell entirely to pieces.

Before Christmastide had fairly arrived the extraordinary number of five hundred summonses were issued against the gas-workers. The charge preferred was one of breach of contract under the Masters and Servants Act of 1866. But eventually they were indicted under the Conspiracy Laws, which rendered them liable to two years' imprisonment

with hard labour. The case came up for hearing at the Old Bailey before Mr. Justice Brett, afterwards Lord Esher. The Gas Companies were represented by the present Lord Chancellor, then Mr. Hardinge Giffard, Q.C. ; but the men had neither the knowledge nor the means to draw up a defence for themselves. In their extremity they appealed to me, and although I protested that as they had disregarded my warnings I had washed my hands of the whole business, I could not turn a deaf ear to their entreaties and abandon them to their fate. Besides, I saw clearly that the undisputed victory of a powerful corporation like the Gas Companies could not fail to have an extremely hurtful effect on the cause of industrial progress. Accordingly, I hastily consulted a number of the members of the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades-Union Congress, and in the course of a few days a special Defence Committee was formed and funds were collected. By this means we were able to retain the services of a well-known firm of solicitors, Messrs. Shaen and Roscoe, who in turn instructed Mr. Straight and Mr. Montague Williams to conduct the case for the defence. After a long trial five of the defendants were sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment. This sentence instantaneously evoked a loud and widespread outcry against its injustice, and a movement quickly followed for the repeal of the iniquitous Masters and Servants Act and the abolition of the jurisdiction of the Conspiracy Laws over trade

disputes. Concurrently with this agitation strenuous efforts were made, with the valuable aid of the London Trades Council, to raise money to pay the costs of the defence of the strikers and to maintain their families while they were in prison.

I well remember the Christmas of 1872. I had been ordered by the Defence Committee to visit the families of the imprisoned men and to report on their necessities. Some lived on the south side and some on the north of the Thames, so that I had not completed my task before night fell. I was then groping my way about West Ham and Barking Creek, and as the night was exceptionally dark I found great difficulty in steering straight in the badly lit and straggling district. At one point I discovered my way entirely barred by a high wall. Ignorant of my whereabouts, I climbed up some railings to reconnoitre, only to find that the railings had been freshly tarred, and my garments clung lovingly to them. With difficulty I managed at length to detach myself without leaving behind any essential portion of my clothes. I was in the midst of congratulating myself on this escape when my foot slipped and I found myself sprawling headlong in a pool of liquid mud. My appearance when I reached home late that night was enough to terrify the stoutest heart ; plastered from head to foot with mud, my clothes torn and smeared with tar, I felt readier to turn scarecrow than enter a decent house.

The combined forces denouncing these outrageous sentences now represented so large an industrial army

that we felt strong enough to bring pressure to bear upon the Government for a mitigation of the sentences. A petition was accordingly drawn up and presented to the Home Secretary, Mr. Henry Bruce, afterwards the first Lord Aberdare. By dint of strenuous agitation the Government was at length induced to release the prisoners at the end of four months. In the meantime the committee had provided for the prisoners' families and kept up their payments to the benevolent societies to which they belonged. I may here mention that twenty-two years later, during the sitting of the Royal Commission on the Aged Poor, over which Lord Aberdare presided, I happened to come across a letter received from him during the agitation of which I have been speaking. I was surprised to find, on reminding him of the matter, that he remembered every detail of the case as if it had occurred only the year before.

The law that persecutions ultimately end in a great accession of strength to the persecuted was not falsified in this business. The prosecution and imprisonment of the gas-stokers rendered a great service to the Labour cause by awakening the public conscience to the iniquity and injustice of these old laws. Mr. William Harcourt and Mr. Henry James in a debate in the House of Commons raised the whole question of the amendment of the criminal law, the Masters and Servants Act, and the law of conspiracy. The Parliamentary Committee of the Trades-Unions hastened to seize the opportunity, and

by means of floods of literature and frequent public meetings and demonstrations in the industrial centres of the midland and northern counties assiduously educated public opinion. The success of this propaganda was witnessed at the General Election of 1874, when most of the candidates, on appealing to ✓ their constituencies, were compelled to promise support to the demand for the repeal of the obnoxious Acts. The result was the passing of two new Acts in 1875—the Workmen and Employers' Act and the Protection of Property Act. Much of the credit of these Acts is due to two of the most able Parliamentary lawyers of the day, Sir William Harcourt and Sir Henry James.

At the end of this agitation in 1873 I was appointed Secretary to the Labour Representation League. This ✓ body was established to promote the return of working men representatives to Parliament and to assist candidates favourable to the Labour cause. One of the first electoral contests in which I was officially concerned was on my own behalf. The League possessed an active and enthusiastic band of supporters in Greenwich, who were burning to try their strength at the London School Board Election of 1873, and insisted on running me as a candidate. So great was their eagerness that my name was entered before I had given my assent. However, I threw myself into the contest, and addressed meetings in all parts of the division, which, if my memory does not play me false, then stretched from Woolwich almost to

the Crystal Palace. We had very little electioneering machinery to speak of, and not more than half a dozen helpers—all of them working men, who could ill afford to give time from their employment to aid us; but we managed to make a right good fight. Altogether, I do not think the contest cost more than thirty pounds, exclusive of small sums spent in travelling and other petty-cash expenditure. We had some splendid meetings, and I polled something like six thousand votes, failing to secure a seat on the Board by only a few hundred votes. It was a fortunate thing for me that I did not succeed, for it would have been impossible to have given the necessary time to the educational requirements of so vast, and in some parts so densely populated a district of the metropolis.

In connection with this contest an amusing incident occurred which may be worth the telling. I was on my way from Cannon Street to address a large open-air meeting at Woolwich in support of my candidature. In the same compartment sat a well-dressed man, who, after a few general remarks, introduced the subject of the School Board Election. He informed me that he understood the working man candidate was making considerable headway and, although a stranger to the district, had earned the good opinion of a large number of voters. He went on to ask me what I had heard of the candidate and whether I knew him. When I had answered the latter question in the affirmative, he wanted to know my opinion of him. Preserving a grave demeanour,

I assured my questioner that I had known the candidate for the greater part of his life, and though I had formed no extravagant opinion of his ability or fitness for this responsible position, I thought it a very proper thing for such a man to be on the School Board, and that the constituency would be doing the right thing to elect him. I added that I personally would do all in my power to secure his return, and I advised my friend to go to the open square in Woolwich where the candidate was to address a meeting, and where he would have an excellent opportunity of judging the man's suitability for himself. We parted at Woolwich Station; and as soon as my turn came to speak I spotted my man in the crowd, and was highly amused to see his bewildered expression as recognition of the speaker gradually dawned upon him. I believe he became an enthusiastic supporter of my candidature, and my failure at the poll was certainly not due to his abstention. For twenty-three years I made no further attempt to gain a seat on any School Board; but at the end of that time I became a candidate for the Cromer School Board and was elected without opposition.

The Labour Representation League, though not immediately successful in realising its aim, still, effected a good purpose by attracting public attention to the question of the rights of Labour to representation, as well as by inspiring the minds of working men with high and laudable aspirations. There had, of course, been attempts to return working men

to Parliament before the formation of the League, but the General Election of 1874 was the first occasion on which such efforts were attended with success. Two Labour representatives were elected, Mr. Thomas Burt for Morpeth, and Mr. Alexander Macdonald for Stafford. With the former election the Labour Representation League had no direct connection. But in the Stafford contest the League was not only responsible for the introduction of Mr. Macdonald to the constituency, but also played a prominent part in securing his success at the poll. As Secretary of the League I was in direct communication with working men in many of the English and Welsh boroughs, and the Committee of the Stafford branch of the League asked me to go down to Stafford to submit to the local executive the names of several working men from whom a candidate should be elected. I was strongly urged to allow my own name to be included in the list; but this I refused to do.

Ultimately Mr. Macdonald was chosen, and threw himself into the contest with great vigour, receiving all through the struggle the constant support of the League. When he was at length returned triumphantly, public opinion outside the county assigned his success to the action of miners, he at that time being at the head of the National Union of Coal-miners, whereas, of course, there was not a miner in the borough. It was entirely an affair of working men of all trades, supported by a number of sturdy Liberals not of the working classes, but who saw in the contest a

good prospect of winning a seat for the Liberal party.

The Stafford contest did not by any means engage the undivided attention of the League during that General Election. On the contrary, I was busily occupied in furthering the causes of other candidates in various parts of the country. Suddenly, at the eleventh hour, I found myself involved in an election on my own account. The constituency which had the honour to be the scene of my first attempt to enter Parliament was the ancient borough of High Wycombe, and my opponent was Colonel Carrington, who had held the seat in the Liberal interest since 1868. The attempt was foredoomed to failure, for I only arrived in the town about twenty-four hours before the time fixed for the poll. As a matter of fact, when I received the invitation I was electioneering three hundred miles from London, and the idea of contesting High Wycombe had never entered my mind. Nevertheless, I could not have had a more pleasant introduction to Parliamentary contests. The Wycombe people were a warm-hearted and open-handed community, they took the keenest interest in the election, and my active supporters were by no means confined to the wage-earning class; in reviewing the incident I am strongly inclined to believe that if I had had a week's notice of my candidature I should have captured the seat, notwithstanding the great and well-deserved influence of the Carringtons.

I have been engaged in many contests in many parts

of this country, but I never took part in a more thoroughly good-humoured one than that at High Wycombe; my opponent treated me with the utmost courtesy, which I was willing enough to reciprocate. The enthusiasm of the electors found an artistic vent in a profusion of ribbons, rosettes, and posies, and on the day of the election they adorned me with so many of these party emblems that I bore the appearance rather of a prize ox at Smithfield Show than an ardent politician. Our side canvassed every dwelling in the constituency, no slight task in so short a time; and we held some capital meetings in the Sunday schools belonging to Nonconformist places of worship; in some cases we even obtained the use of the chapel itself. A few months after my unsuccessful attempt I paid a second visit to High Wycombe, when, greatly to my surprise and gratification, the people presented me with a purse of twenty sovereigns, an illuminated address, and many other little tokens of sincere friendship. Even to this day I never travel on the Great Western line through Wycombe without recalling with a sense of pleasure how I set out on my forlorn hope from Maidenhead on a raw and foggy morning in the winter of 1874.

CHAPTER V

ON THE THRESHOLD OF PARLIAMENT

IN October of the next year the Trades-Union Congress, which met in Glasgow, elected me as their Parliamentary Secretary, a post I retained until ill-health compelled my resignation in September, 1890, after an unbroken membership of the Executive Committee for eighteen years. This new appointment did not interfere with my duties as Secretary of the Labour Representation League, which I continued to discharge until its dissolution. From that time I devoted my energies to the work of the Congress, though continuing to take an active part in political movements. There was much to occupy the attention of the leaders of Labour in those days. Continuous watchfulness was imperative to guard the administration of the Labour legislation of 1875. Each year revealed new wants and new opportunities ; each year increased the demands on our time and energies, as the records of the Congress will reveal.

My own duties were largely concerned with the dissemination of literature, preparing reports, recording the work which the Executive Committee had accomplished each year, and pointing out the objects yet

to be attained. In addition, we endeavoured to extend our sphere of influence by holding public meetings in most of the great provincial towns. One of the first objects on which our efforts were centred was the passing of Mr. Plimsoll's Merchants' Shipping Bill, which became an Act in 1876. In its support we organised one of the largest deputations ever brought together in London, composed of delegates from all the trades-unions in Great Britain.

It was in 1876 that I first tried my hand at legislation. I drew up a Bill for the abolition of the property qualification attaching to membership of local governing authorities. My object was, of course, to enable working men to become members of town councils, vestries, and similiar bodies. Few people remember that at the time of which I speak legislation existed which effectually debarred wage-earners from these bodies. The qualification was dependent upon the number of wards constituting a town. In small towns it was a £15 assessment or £500 deposit in the bank, but in the case of towns with large populations the amount of the qualification was doubled. I entrusted this measure to Mr. Mundella, who introduced it in 1876, and two years later it was added to the Statute Book. As a result the only qualification necessary for election to local authorities at the present moment is that of being a ratepayer. So far as legal disqualifications are concerned, there is nothing to prevent the poorest ratepayer in the country becoming the chief magistrate of his town.

The next question to be tackled was that of the liability of employers to compensate their workpeople for injuries sustained in their employment. In 1876 Mr. Macdonald, to whose election to represent Stafford I have already alluded, introduced a measure dealing with this subject which the Executive Committee had drawn up. It was entitled the Compensation for Injuries Bill, and was read a second time, with the result that the Government appointed a Select Committee to deal with the whole question. By a curious coincidence the witness who gave the strongest support to the workmen's demands was the very man—Mr. Justice Brett—who four years earlier had sentenced the poor gas-stokers to twelve months' imprisonment. Notwithstanding the unanswerable arguments of this learned judge in support of our case, we were unsuccessful in obtaining any legislation during the life of that Parliament, though the work done both inside and outside the House of Commons proved of the utmost value in educating public opinion on this important subject.

Two other questions occupied the attention of the Executive Committee during this year. The first concerned the lamentable loss of life and destruction of property arising from boiler explosions, due either to neglect or to the employment of unqualified men. We brought the matter before the House of Commons, and drafted a Bill, which in later years it was my privilege to introduce for the first time to Parliament. The other subject was the emendation of the Trades-

Unions Act of 1870, which experience had shown to require improvement in some important particulars. We induced the Government to bring in a short measure (which became law the same session) enabling unions to hold real property and removing other irritating little obstacles to the growth of the movement. These legislative triumphs were followed in 1877 and 1878 by the introduction of the Consolidating Act dealing with factory and workshop laws by the Home Secretary, Sir Richard Cross. By carefully framed amendments the Committee secured several important improvements in the Bill, which was a great advance on previous legislation, especially in the matter of reducing the hours of labour of women and children.

Before leaving this somewhat tedious but necessary account of the legislative labours of the Executive Committee, I must devote a little space to a very important and direct outcome of the Committee's action—*viz.*, the proposed codification of the criminal law of Great Britain.

The harsh treatment accorded by the law to the representatives of the Labour cause for so many years had plainly opened their eyes to the uncertainties as well as the severities of our criminal law, and under the advice and with the assistance of men like Mr. Frederic Harrison and Mr. Henry Crompton, the leaders of the trades-unions resolved to utilise the political power and influence behind them in endeavouring to obtain a clear and in-

telligible statement of the criminal law of the country and to purge the Statute Book of some of its antiquated and obsolete criminal enactments. Such a codification would, it was thought, remove some of the pitfalls and uncertainties from which the working man had suffered in the past in his endeavours to raise his condition to a higher level in the body politic. The subject was fully debated in every trade in the kingdom ; innumerable resolutions in favour of the proposal were passed ; and pamphlets advocating this legal reform were issued in large numbers by the Committee. Turning to more practical methods of attaining this object, the Committee at length approached Sir James FitzJames Stephen, the greatest living authority on the criminal law, and a strong sympathiser with the cause of legal reform. After several interviews and a good deal of correspondence, Sir James consented to the Committee's request that he would deliver a lecture on this important topic under the auspices of the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades-Union Congress. The lecture, which took place at the Society of Arts under the presidency of the Right Honourable Lord Coleridge in the enforced absence of Lord Chief Justice Cockburn, proved a great success, attracting much public attention, and giving cohesion to our labours and direction to our efforts. Arrangements had been made for a full report of the proceedings, and in returning a corrected proof of this report which I had sent him, Sir James wrote the following letter :—

"MY DEAR SIR,—

"I return the copy of the lecture with the alteration of a few words. On looking over the report of what passed on that occasion I have been pleasantly reminded of what was a memorable meeting to me. I hope it may be of service to the public. I doubt whether any other class of persons in England would have shown half the interest in the subject which was shown by the members of the trades-unions. I can only say that if it is ever in my power to show particularly how deeply I am sensible of their kindness, it will give me pleasure to do so.

"Believe me,

"Ever faithfully yours,

(Signed) "J. F. STEPHEN.

"H. BROADHURST, ESQ."

Shortly after this Lord Cairns, then Lord Chancellor, invited Sir James Stephen to draft a Criminal Code ; the draft Code was duly drawn up, and submitted to a Commission of legal experts at the instance of the Government. After passing safely through this ordeal, the Code was introduced to Parliament in the shape of a Bill. But there the matter ended so far as any further progress is concerned. In 1883 Sir James published in three volumes his "History of the Criminal Law of England," which, I believe, is considered by those capable of forming an opinion the most valuable publication on the subject ever compiled. In February of that year I was gratified to receive from him a copy of the work with the following inscription on the title-page: "Henry Broadhurst,

Esq., M.P. With the Author's kind regards and grateful recollections."

From this it will be gathered that for some years previous to 1883 I had been in frequent communication, both by letter and by personal interviews, with this distinguished lawyer. The recollection of my first interview with him I retained very vividly for many a long day. Not that he showed me the slightest lack of civility. On the contrary, he was most considerate and courteous; but his great stature and his hard, penetrating look filled me with awe till I felt like a pigmy in the presence of a giant. But this not altogether unnatural feeling soon wore off, giving place to a warm regard and admiration during our somewhat lengthened acquaintance, which I believe I might truthfully say ripened into friendship.

Another eminent man with whom I became acquainted at this time was Professor Toynbee. I first met him at the Trades-Union Congress of 1877, which he attended entirely unknown to those present. He asked my permission to occupy a seat where he might closely follow the proceedings. I saw him on many subsequent occasions, continuing to meet him at intervals until his death in 1883. I especially remember hearing him deliver two lectures in the Cambridge Hall, Newman Street, Oxford Street, in the course of which he criticised Henry George's book on Land Nationalisation with great zest and freedom. But the second of the lectures made too great demands upon his enfeebled frame, and I fancy he never

fully rallied from the physical exhaustion its delivery entailed. He put into these lectures a vast amount of intense feeling, both passion and pathos, and his strength was inadequate to the immense mental strain to which it was subjected. I never met a man more absolutely in earnest, a soul so full of its theme. His intensity resembled the spirit which actuated the Hebrew prophets rather than the Laodicean attitude characteristic of the modern reformer.

The reform of the criminal law was by no means a solitary example of the way in which the efforts of the Parliamentary Committee were exerted, not merely for the working classes, but on behalf of the community at large. In fact, we fulfilled the functions of the Radical wing of the Liberal Party. Reform of the Jury Laws, amendment of the Summary Jurisdiction Act, reduction and restriction of legal costs and payments to the Clerks of the Peace, modifications of the Shipping and Patent Laws were all planks in our platform, which, affecting the working man chiefly, undoubtedly touched much wider interests. This phase of our work procured for us the co-operation of many men entirely unassociated with the Labour cause, who manifested a keen interest in the wider aspects of our work. Some even went so far in their appreciation as to offer liberal contributions to our funds. One of these distinguished admirers was the late Lord Bramwell, who, to say the least of it, was no thick-and-thin supporter of the combination of Labour against Capital. Yet he called on me one

day to express his personal thanks to the Committee for our labours in the public interest, and handed me a cheque for £10 as a mark of his appreciation of what had already been accomplished, and as an earnest of his faith in the Committee's capacity to secure many of the objects on which we had set our minds. But to all such well-wishers I had but one reply—that while fully conscious of the high compliment paid to the Committee by the offer of money from men of such eminence, the Committee had made it an invariable rule to accept no contributions from other sources than the trades-unions. During the fifteen years of my secretaryship that rule was never broken, and I believe I am justified in saying that neither before nor since that period has money been accepted from the general public by the Committee in aid of its propaganda. This must not be taken to mean that our wealth was so abundant that we could afford to regard lightly any offers of financial help from the outside. On the contrary, the Committee had difficulty in obtaining sufficient contributions from the trades-unions to carry on its work at all, and the infrequency of our meetings was dictated by the meagreness of funds to meet the travelling expenses of the members of the Committee. In those days the holding of a committee meeting involved considerable expenditure. One or two members travelled from the West of England, others from Scotland, and not a few from the northern and midland counties of England. Their railway fares and the regulation allowance of twelve shillings and sixpence a day—not too liberal an

allowance, considering the expensive nature of London lodgings—made a serious drain upon our exchequer. A meeting of the full Committee seldom cost less than forty pounds.

The next popular agitation in which I was interested] had no direct connection with the cause of Labour. Between 1875 and 1880 occurred the devilish atrocities of the Unspeakable Turk in Bulgaria, and a voice was heard in the land calling for vengeance upon the murdering and ravishing crew let loose by the black-hearted tyrant at Constantinople. I became associated with the Eastern Question Association, of which the Duke of Westminster was President, but Mr. Gladstone supplied the motive power. I was present at the first gathering of a few people interested in the subject, out of which the association grew. Among these few were Mr. George Howard, the present Earl of Carlisle, and William Morris. I devoted all my spare time to the furtherance of the movement. I organised a Workmen's Committee to the Association and personally conducted its operations. On one occasion I succeeded in obtaining in less than a week some fifteen thousand signatures to a petition condemning the Bulgarian Atrocities, and urging the Government to take immediate action against the Turk, the signatories consisting almost wholly of office-bearers of the various branches of the trades-unions in the United Kingdom. This petition was conveyed to the House of Commons on top of a four-wheeled cab, and presented to Parliament by Mr. John Bright. To

complete the task of preparing this petition I was compelled to employ relays of men night and day for nearly a week. A continuous stream of postmen staggering under sacks filled with letters containing signatures flowed into my offices. The whole affair was a remarkable illustration of what can be accomplished in a week by a well-organised body. Mr. James Rowlands, for some time Parliamentary representative for Finsbury, was my chief assistant in this great effort.

The first proceeding of the Eastern Question Association was to convene a national conference in St. James's Hall. The delegates were drawn from the accredited representatives of Liberal Associations and the Nonconformist Churches, as well as many distinguished individuals belonging to all denominations and all grades of Society. It is difficult to give any adequate idea of the excited state of the popular mind in London at that time, though the regrettable occurrences at Exeter Hall in March, 1900, and the uproar which followed upon the news of the relief of Ladysmith, may enable my readers faintly to realise the condition of affairs. Jingoism had grown rampant under the glamour of the Beaconsfield Government; the Great Macdermott was trumpeting the Jingo hymn, "We've got the ships, we've got the men, we've got the money, too!" nightly from the music-hall stage; and everywhere the fashionable club-lounger and the man in the street were possessed by the demon of brutality and openly glorified the Turkish Empire in

their frenzied hatred of the Russian. In the midst of this uproar the Eastern Question Association resolved to hold their first public meeting in Exeter Hall. I had by this time attained some reputation as an organiser, and so the arrangements for this gathering were to a large degree entrusted to me. With the aid of a number of well-known and experienced working men I consented to organise this assembly, whose voice was to condemn the Eastern policy of the Government, and support Mr. Gladstone's efforts on behalf of the Balkan States.

It was a great undertaking, demanding much careful planning, but we spared no pains to make the gathering a thorough success. Admission was by ticket only, and these tickets were distributed among the political and trades-union associations of the metropolis. We had a large staff of stewards present at the entrances and in the hall itself, supported by a numerous body of police to regulate admission. It was arranged that the doors should be opened an hour before the time fixed for the commencement of the meeting. How to entertain the huge crowd during this interval was a problem that beset us, and we solved it by providing some music. One of my former mates at the mason's bench was organist at a West End place of worship, and I knew that his choir was composed entirely of working men and women. Having secured the consent of the proprietors of Exeter Hall to use the organ, I induced my friend and his choir to lend us their services. I then proposed to William

Morris that he should write an inspiring song to be rendered as a prelude to the Chairman's address. The following is a copy of Morris's verses, which were sung to the air of "The hardy Norsemen's home of yore":—

WAKE, LONDON LADS!

BY WILLIAM MORRIS

Wake, London lads! wake, bold and free!
 Arise, and fall to work,
 Lest England's glory come to be
 Bond-servant to the Turk!
 Think of your sires! how oft and oft
 On freedom's field they bled,
 When Cromwell's hand was raised aloft,
 And kings and scoundrels fled.

From out the dusk, from out the dark,
 Of old our fathers came,
 Till lovely freedom's glimmering spark
 Broke forth a glorious flame:
 And shall we now praise freedom's dearth
 And rob the years to come,
 And quench upon a brother's hearth
 The fires we lit at home?

O happy England, if thine hand
 Should forge anew the chain,
 The fetters of a tortured land,
 How were thy glory vain!
 Our starving men, our women's tears,
 The graves of those we love,
 Should buy us curses for all years,
 A weight we might not move.

Yea, through the fog of unjust war
What thief on us might steal,
To rob us of the gifts of yore,
The hope of England's weal?
The toilsome years have built and earned,
Great men in hope have died;
Shall all the lesson be unlearned,
The treasure scattered wide?

What! shall we crouch beneath the load,
And call the labour sweet,
And, dumb and blind, go down the road
Where shame abides our feet?
Wake, London lads! the hour draws nigh,
The bright sun brings the day;
Cast off the shame, cast off the lie,
And cast the Turk away!

A copy of this song was handed to every person entering the hall, and the Rev. G. M. Murphy, a Nonconformist minister of much note in South London, read it out verse by verse in the old Methodist fashion, after which the choir sang it twice to accustom the audience to the time and tune. The effect when the burning words were thundered forth by the vast assembly was electrifying. I believe this was the first occasion on which music and singing were introduced to while away the time of waiting at a political meeting; since then the practice has grown rapidly into favour, until it has now become practically universal.

A trusty band of sympathisers had been drawn up at the two entrances of the hall. They were all acquainted with the features of the leaders of the Jingo mob, and their experience of the London rough

gave them an almost intuitive knowledge of the kind of individuals who would seek admission for the purpose of making a disturbance. Notwithstanding these precautions, many Jingo sympathisers managed to get in ; but their efforts to interrupt the proceedings proved abortive in face of the overwhelming mass of sympathy with the objects of the meeting. I took my turn at one of the doors in order to see what was going on, and I marked one powerful young fellow, who I felt certain was bent on mischief, making a rush for the hall. Seizing him by the collar, I threw him to the floor, and a policeman—over six foot four, one of the finest specimens of humanity I have ever seen—caught him up by the extremities and carried him bodily out into the street. This action had a striking effect on the mob outside, and no further attempts at disturbance occurred. The result of the meeting was a great success in the way of enheartening the association and its supporters, and all who were present agreed that it marked a new epoch in the public attitude towards the Eastern Question.

A second venture in the same direction, however, proved abortive. It was proposed to hold a mass meeting in the Agricultural Hall, at which Mr. Gladstone was to be present and make a speech. After a considerable amount of time and money had been spent on the preparations and the most elaborate precautions against interruption and attack from the outside had been arranged, Mr. Gladstone was induced

by his friends, who were alarmed at the uproar created by the announcement of the meeting, to advise the Workmen's Committee to abandon the idea. Widespread and acute disappointment was felt by the working classes all over London ; but our chagrin was lessened by the receipt of the following letter from Mr. Gladstone explaining his reasons for withdrawing his promise to speak :—

"73, HARLEY STREET,

" *February 20th, 1878.*

" DEAR SIR,—

" I have to acknowledge the receipt of the Resolution passed yesterday at a Meeting of the Workmen's Neutrality Committee ; and I cannot feel any surprise that you and your coadjutors, promoters of the Meeting at the Agricultural Hall, should, after the passing of such a Resolution by a body so trustworthy, have resolved to proceed no further with the plan at the present moment.

" In your end and aim, which, as I understand them, were to support the Government in all measures taken in the interest of peace and of freedom, I have received ample evidence that the great mass of the working men of this country are firmly united with you. Nor can I think that your preliminary labours have been thrown away, when I learn that they have supplied you with proof of the anxiety, not of thousands only, but of tens of thousands, without reference to domestic politics, to testify this feeling by their presence and attention at a calm and orderly assemblage.

" As to the means you had chosen, the question is a nice one, what amount of urgency in the actual state of public affairs is such as to justify you exposing masses of the people to the possible inconveniences which, in Meetings

on a vast scale, it is often practicable for a few handfuls of persons, opposed to sober discussion, to bring about. The courage with which, upon a new change of circumstances, you have taken upon yourselves the responsibility of this choice appears to me to increase, and not to diminish, your claims to the confidence of the great bodies of working men on whose behalf you act.

"I remain, dear Sir,

"With sincere respect,

"Faithfully yours,

"W. E. GLADSTONE.

"MR. H. BROADHURST."

About the same time a large meeting of representative working men was summoned to consider the advisability of holding a demonstration in Hyde Park in support of Mr. Gladstone's position. Unfortunately, a division of opinion on the question of the day on which the demonstration should be held occurred, and, if I remember rightly, Mr. Bradlaugh threw all the weight of his great influence into the scale for holding it on a Sunday, with the result that when a vote was taken Sunday was decided upon by a majority of one. I immediately withdrew from the proceedings, for I felt certain that the trades-unions would not turn out on a Sunday, whereas if a working-day, especially Saturday, had been fixed upon, I knew there was every chance in favour of unanimous co-operation. Sunday meetings for trade or political purposes were then almost unknown in London. My misgivings were confirmed by the event, for the demonstration resulted in a fiasco, partly due to faulty organisation. Great

confusion ensued, and Mr. Bradlaugh and others were personally assaulted.

As my readers will notice from the address on his letter, Mr. Gladstone was at this time living in Harley Street. The rampant Jingoism of London subjected him to every form of brutal and vulgar insult, and indeed for him, as for many other prominent opponents of the Turk, it was almost unsafe to go out unattended. In the provinces, however, quite another state of affairs obtained, and the tide of public opinion was overwhelmingly on Mr. Gladstone's side. One of the most enthusiastic and brilliant gatherings ever held in Birmingham assembled in Bingley Hall to support his policy. His arrival in the midland city resembled the return of a great and victorious warrior. It required all the skill of the renowned police force of Birmingham to maintain order in the streets among the thousands of people, almost delirious with excitement, who lined every street through which Mr. Gladstone passed to and from the meeting—in fact, I believe in all the main thoroughfares strong barriers were erected to keep back the admiring crowds. I shall never forget the scene in the hall itself. Three speeches delivered that night indelibly impressed themselves on my memory—the speeches of Mr. Gladstone, the late Dr. Dale, and Mr. (now Sir) Henry H. Fowler. I think I am right in saying that this was the first occasion on which Mr. Gladstone met the Methodist lawyer who was so soon after to become closely associated with him in the House of Commons.

[The soul of the country was stirred to its very depths by the marvellous eloquence, the touching pathos, and the burning passion of the great Liberal leader's speeches. I shall not be guilty of exaggeration if I say that the Nonconformists of Great Britain to a man, ay, and a woman, had ranged themselves on his side. They looked upon him as the deliverer of nations, the inspired leader of peoples, as a giant of unsurpassed strength wrestling with and conquering the powers of injustice and oppression. His country was the world ; mankind of every colour and creed were his brothers. Not once in many centuries does a nation possess a son who commands such universal and almost inexhaustible admiration as was lavished upon William Ewart Gladstone in those days. I have often felt that at this period many a man would have esteemed it an honour and counted it a happy martyrdom to die for the great Chieftain. In those days I saw much of Mr. Gladstone, frequently having to call at his house. Sometimes he would visit me at my offices at Charing Cross ; and from that time until his retirement from the political arena no man gave me a firmer grip of the hand, a heartier greeting, or more encouraging words, than our beloved leader on every occasion when I came in contact with him.] I took part in nearly every public event connected with the Eastern Question and the Bulgarian Atrocities, and this brought me into close contact with a class of people whom I otherwise should never have met.

Before I leave this account of my pre-Parliamentary days I must refer to one other event connected with trades-unionism, an event disastrous in many ways to men and to employers. It happened in this way. The masons employed on the new Law Courts asked for an increase of wages amounting to a penny an hour. The contractor responded by offering a halfpenny an hour by way of compromise. But this the men refused, and a prolonged strike resulted. There was nothing at all remarkable about that ; but a new move was made by the employers, who, for the first time in the history of Labour in this country, took carefully planned and effective measures to import foreign labour on a large scale. France, Germany, and Italy were ransacked by the Employers' Association for masons, and men were even imported from New York. This procedure introduced a new feeling of bitterness into the eternal struggle between Capital and Labour. The difficulty of reasoning with the Italians and Germans, owing to linguistic differences, rendered picketing practically useless ; with the French no trouble was experienced, for the all-sufficient reason that, so far as I remember, not a single Frenchman crossed the Channel to oppose us. But a large number of Italians and Germans, particularly the former, were brought over under the auspices of the Employers' Association. The only way to open up communications with these foreigners was to organise an efficient band of interpreters ; and this, with our limited resources, proved by no means an easy task. We had

to secure reliable men in sympathy with the cause of Labour, and having obtained them, one of the Committee had always to be on the spot to see that our desires were duly carried out, and that the interpreters were not "got at" by the employers.

The first batch of Germans came from North Prussia ; to meet these men and to get between them and the employers' agents without bringing ourselves within the meshes of the law demanded considerable skill, some daring readiness of resource, and above all a free expenditure of money. The Germans took kindly to the liberal supply of food, drink, and tobacco gratuitously provided by our Committee ; but I must do them the justice of saying that I never remember seeing one of them intoxicated. We entertained them as royally as our circumstances admitted, and they enjoyed our companionship, what was lacking in knowledge of the two languages being supplied by signs and tokens of good fellowship. We gave them the best views of London obtainable by drives through the streets and trips on the river ; we showed them all the sights by day, and the nights we passed in conviviality and the singing of our respective national songs, which seemed to be enjoyed with a zest in proportion to our inability to understand each other's language. When subsequently we "rounded up" our flock (to use a shepherd's metaphor) and carried them in triumph down the river for reshipment home, we had the satisfaction of feeling that at last we were relieved of one of the greatest burdens ever imposed upon us

in strike or lock-out. The fraternal farewells were prolonged and hearty, and an onlooker might well have fancied he was witnessing the parting of beloved comrades-in-arms, rather than the farewells of men, strangers alike by nationality and tongue. We were greatly struck by the smartness and superior intelligence manifested by a number of the Teutons hailing from Berlin ; and it required no extraordinary acumen to see that if these men had stayed we should have found in them formidable competitors. Fortunately for us, these very men were the most willing, not to say anxious, to yield to our wishes and to return to their native land when they discovered the false pretences under which they had been lured to London.

The Italians were men of a very different type, by no means as intelligent or possessing the same physique, and we found them difficult to get hold of. In fact, our attempts to intercept them mostly fell through ; the greater number reached the works and continued in employment until the end of the dispute. But the most difficult of all to deal with were the New York men, though I do not think they were American-born. They were about the keenest men at a bargain I have ever come across. Their inexhaustible wants amazed us ; try as we would we could never satisfy them ; and after squeezing our organisation like a sponge, they deserted to the enemy and started work !

Of course these endeavours to wean the foreigners from the employers entailed an enormous cost on the Masons' Society. The provision of food and

lodging for the immigrants, the expenditure on sight-seeing to keep them in good humour, added to the burden of supporting our own members out of work, had a devastating effect upon the financial resources of the Union. Resort was had to a general levy, with the usual chilling effect upon the weak and less enthusiastic members. During a part of the time those members of the Union who were in employment in London paid a shilling a day in addition to the usual contribution, and this brought their weekly payments to a total of seven shillings—a severe strain on the loyalty of the men. In addition, those members who had saved any money advanced it or some part of it (as the case might be) to the central office. By this means, coupled with the credit obtained from the licensed houses to which our lodges and relieving-stations were attached, we were able to discharge all our pressing liabilities, and none of the sick or infirm suffered any considerable inconvenience by reason of deferred payments. In those days it was a common practice in times of stress for the landlord of the public-house at which the branch of the Union was located, to allow payments due to him to stand over till it was convenient to discharge the account. He would even advance money out of his own pocket to the Union without charging interest, and without using the influence thus obtained to induce the men to drink more than their custom.

This was the last Labour struggle with which I was personally associated. At the time I was not working

at my trade, and I took no part in the executive work of directing the strike. Indeed, I had been opposed to the policy which led up to it, being convinced that with a little more caution and discernment this disastrous struggle, like many of the wars history records, might have been avoided. But the majority decided otherwise : an open rupture with the employers followed ; and when that had occurred I felt it my duty to assist in strengthening a position undesirable in itself. But I only entered the arena when specially invited to do so by the Strike Committee. There was one occasion during the dispute when it might have been settled by arbitration. Mr. George Godwin, the editor of *The Builder*, offered his services through me as arbitrator or intermediary to bring the contending parties to a settlement. The offer was communicated to a specially convened meeting of delegates, but unfortunately was rejected by them. Two months later they deeply regretted their mistake ; but it was too late : the contest was fought out to the bitter end, to the loss of both sides and to the disorganisation of the masons and their Society. One consequence of this dispute and the importation of foreign labour was the revival of the question of an international committee representing the workers of all European countries and the United States. Although even now this matter has not advanced far, certain steps were taken which brought this desirable goal nearer in view.

CHAPTER VI

WITHIN THE PRECINCTS

DURING the period when the Eastern Question occupied men's minds to the detriment of all other questions, the subject of Labour representation in Parliament was not entirely forgotten. Although the League specially formed to promote the cause had practically ceased to exist, the seed sown by it was taking root. The Parliamentary borough of Stoke-upon-Trent had twice been contested in the interest of Labour without success. In 1878, in view of the approaching General Election, the Liberal and Labour Party of the borough met, and after consultation invited Mr. William Woodall, a local manufacturer, and myself to contest the constituency against the two sitting members, both Conservatives—Mr. Robert Heath, who owned large coal and iron works in the neighbourhood, and was very popular, and Dr. Kenealy, the defender of the Tichborne Claimant. From this time until the election I was naturally a frequent visitor to the Potteries towns included in borough of Stoke. I addressed many public meetings during the two years of my candidature, though none of them, curiously enough, were exclusively

trades-union gatherings. I found the work-people of these towns the most intelligent and broadminded of any industrial communities I had hitherto met. Their one desire was that I should succeed, and to secure success they wisely recognised the necessity of obtaining the support of all classes. They were consequently content that I, though primarily a representative of Labour interests, should fight the election on general political principles. I had, when first approached on the subject, refused to listen to the proposal, feeling that my time was fully occupied by my duties as Secretary of the Parliamentary Committee, and the prospect of contesting a constituency consisting of some half a dozen towns, each of sufficient importance to possess its own local governing authorities, and representing large commercial interests, looked too serious to gain an easy consent from me. Besides, I considered my slender income totally inadequate to meet the demands of a House of Commons life. But the combined pressure of Liberal and Labour Parties in the constituency was too strong for me; my own feelings were overruled, and I accepted the invitation.

When the dissolution came at last, I became painfully alive to the difficult project to which I was pledged. With my colleague, Mr. Woodall, I at once embarked on a series of meetings which in about six weeks had totalled up for each of us between sixty and seventy separate gatherings. The chief towns were Tunstall, Longport, Burslem, Hanley,

Stoke, Fenton, and Longton, with districts like Etruria, Cobridge, and others thrown in. I found in my new occupation all the elements of excitement. We seldom finished our last meeting before midnight, and occasionally it was nearer one o'clock than twelve before I could end my day's round of oratory and sit down to dinner. As the next day's work began at 7.45 a.m. with a round of the polling-stations, my margin of sleep was narrow. But it was a fine contest : the whole borough seemed one continuous mass-meeting ; and our gatherings were all enlivened by vocal and instrumental music. We had the advantage of an extremely popular townsman as the Chairman of one Election Committee, Mr. John Wash Peake ; but this influence was counteracted by the local influence of Mr. Robert Heath, who employed a great body of men, and was a native of the district, retaining many characteristics of his earlier and less prosperous years. He had sat for the borough since 1874, and his ample means enabled him to bring into play to an almost unlimited extent all the legitimate machinery of electioneering. In those days it was legal to use hired vehicles to bring voters to the poll, which closed at four in the afternoon, and not at eight o'clock, as it now does.

When the eventful day arrived streams of conveyances of every shape and form filled the streets flaunting Mr. Heath's colours ; while, unless my memory plays me false, neither my colleague nor myself had a single vehicle at our disposal except that in which we drove through the different towns.

During the contest Dr. Kenealy had practically dropped out of sight. Certainly no notice was taken of his candidature, and no reference was made to him from our platforms. The Heath interest was directed mainly against myself as a stranger and a Labour candidate, and for a time I thought myself doomed to failure. However, the result proved that the enthusiasm manifested at our meetings, and the demonstrations of popular favour in the streets, were genuine expressions of the feelings which animated the voters, for both Liberal candidates were returned with a combined majority of over ten thousand votes.

The wild scene of the election will never be effaced from my memory. Every factory and workshop was closed. The streets were lined with enthusiastic crowds from early morning till late night. A procession of Pottery girls, dressed in their best and decorated with the Liberal colours, paraded the streets, encouraging the voters to support the Liberal cause, and doing much to stimulate the energy of those over-confident people who are often the cause of the loss of an election. On the day after the poll the two Members were called upon to drive through the whole length of the Potteries district. In many cases work had not been resumed, and the whole country-side seemed to have given itself up to the celebration of the great victory. In Longton market-place enthusiastic supporters seized me and carried me round and round the square shoulder high, to the no small risk of my limbs, my niece watching the

procession with mingled amusement and terror from a coign of vantage near the Town Hall. It is not too much to say that on this occasion the wives of the voters and the working girls engaged in the Potteries showed a power and influence over the fortunes of the election which I have never since witnessed in the same degree, either in my own contests or in the great number of elections in which I have taken part all over Great Britain.

As an example of this influence let me mention an incident that occurred in the midst of the campaign preceding the election. My colleague, Mr. Woodall, had previously taken an active part in School Board work in Burslem. The Tories fastened upon this fact to make a determined attack upon the policy of popular education. They endeavoured to incite the worst passions of the working classes against him by accusing him of causing unnecessary and extravagant expenditure to the ratepayers. These efforts were mainly concentrated on Longport, whose walls were plastered with posters making these accusations in the biggest type obtainable. Speaking at a large midday meeting in the town, I took up the cudgels on Mr. Woodall's behalf, claiming that if there was one thing more than another that entitled him to their suffrages it was this very fact that he had insisted upon the best class of instruction being imparted by the most competent teachers to their boys and girls. I enlarged on the value of education, pointing out that no class of society held a monopoly

of brains, and that the children of the poorest among them, if they had equal opportunities with the rich, would be as receptive as the boys and girls of the wealthiest in the land. Immediately in front of me sat an exceptionally robust and well-built woman, clasping to her bared breast an infant, who appeared to be only a few months old, but showed plain signs of having inherited the splendid physique of his mother. These two I took as illustrations of my argument, and immediately mother and child became the cynosure of every eye. I referred in complimentary terms to the fine proportions of the pair, asking my critics whether that child, given the same opportunities of training, would not equal in intellectual attainments any child born of wealthy parents. If means and opportunities were provided to develop his faculties, I maintained that for aught we knew the infant might in the future be a great soldier, sailor, poet, or statesman. As I proceeded in this impassioned strain I saw the mother clasping her child tighter and tighter to her bosom, and when the meeting was over she came up and gave me a slap on the shoulder that nearly sent me sprawling on my face, assuring me with an emphatic adjective not now commonly used in polite society that if her man didn't vote straight for Woodall and Broadhurst she would give him the handsomest licking he had ever had in his life. This declaration, delivered in the loudest of tones, secured a far more enthusiastic ovation than my eloquence had aroused. My experience of her influence exhibited in the touch upon

my shoulder convinced me that in the whole of the constituency we should not find a sturdier supporter than "her man."

During the contest I put up at a commercial hotel, the freehold property of the landlord who presided over its hospitable board. Curiously enough, it was the rendezvous of the leading Conservatives who were working in Mr. Heath's favour; yet I have never been treated better or enjoyed greater privacy than during my four weeks' residence at this house. I became fast friends with mine host, and since his death his widow has remained a friend of my family circle, though she has never abated one jot or tittle of her sturdy adhesion to the Conservative Party.

The contest over, I hastened back to my secretarial duties and devoted myself assiduously for a couple of weeks to making up for lost time. The House of Commons was no strange place to me; to many of the members I had been personally known for several years. I had constantly led deputations to the leading politicians on both sides of the House, and on many occasions friendly consultations had taken place between prominent Front Bench men and myself as the representative of the trades-unions. With the officials in and about the precincts I was also pretty intimately acquainted, as in my position of Secretary to the Parliamentary Committee I had enjoyed the *entrée* of the Lobby from 1873. Consequently, in many instances I needed no formal introduction to the members of the House; on the contrary, I was enabled to perform

that pleasing duty to my colleague, who was making his first entry, and whose knowledge of his fellow-members was extremely limited.

The result of the General Election was an unmistakable justification of the foreign policy advocated by Mr. Gladstone while in Opposition, and a material strengthening of the work of the Eastern Question Association. The theatrical character of Lord Beaconsfield's return from Berlin and other incidents of the Jingo campaign quickly faded from memory ; Liberalism was in the ascendant, and Mr. Gladstone sat for the second time on the Treasury Bench as Prime Minister of Great Britain and Ireland.

During the preceding five or six years I had thought my work sufficiently heavy and exhausting, and had imagined that it would be next to impossible to add to my undertakings and engagements. This proved to be a singular delusion, for in the years that followed my entry to the House my labours may be said to have been doubled and my opportunities for rest proportionately lessened. Nothing but my iron constitution and enthusiasm for the work could have sustained me in this trying period.

I found myself face to face with an entirely new situation, imposing new responsibilities and requiring larger means. During my married life, which commenced at nineteen years of age, I had always practised a fair measure of frugality ; but a seat in Parliament and a salary of £150, out of which I had to pay for any clerical assistance I required, seemed utterly

incongruous. But the situation had to be met, and I met it by maintaining the same habits at home and abroad as before my election, with the exception of such changes as were unavoidable when Parliament was sitting. In the matter of dress I followed the same line of conduct. For years past all my clothes had been made at home by my wife, and for several years of my Parliamentary life my wife remained my only tailor—a circumstance which I fancy is unique in the history of the English Parliament. But with all these economies my financial position was far from comfortable.

Having gained the right to sit in the House, with Mr. Macdonald and Mr. Burt as my Labour colleagues, I felt, as Secretary of the Parliamentary Committee, I ought to take advantage of the new Parliament and the presence of the Liberal Party on the Speaker's right hand to do something definite and substantial at an early stage on behalf of the workers of the United Kingdom. The result of the pressure I was able to apply was that the Government decided to bring in a Bill dealing with employers' liability to compensate workmen for injuries received in their service. The Bill was put into the charge of the President of the Local Government Board, Mr. Dodson, afterwards Lord Monk Bretton, and it was down for the second reading in the month of June. On the night preceding the debate I was summoned to Oxford to what proved to be the death-bed of my mother, and I did not reach home again until the

early hours of the next morning. I was engaged all the day with some trades-union deputations ; and thus it was under circumstances of great depression and physical exhaustion that I rose to make my maiden speech before the Mother of Parliaments—an ordeal that must be endured before its hateful nature can be fully realised. Some there are who can undergo this searching trial without flinching, but not many. As I rose from my seat a strange feeling of isolation crept over me, and when I had uttered the words “Mr. Speaker,” I felt as if the floor were opening to swallow me, and I almost wished my feeling would come true. But after a few minutes I overcame my nervousness and let myself go as freely as if I were addressing a gathering of labourers or artisans. I spoke for about forty minutes, and immediately I sat down Mr. Gladstone came to me, and with hearty congratulations and a warm shake of the hand bade me welcome to the House. His example was followed by Sir John Holker, the late Attorney-General in Disraeli’s Ministry, and by some other members. I experienced a vast feeling of relief at having made my bow to that critical assembly. Physically and mentally, it was the most unfortunate night of the whole year that I could have been called upon to make my maiden effort ; but circumstances dictated the occasion, and I had to meet it as best I could. From that moment my fear of the House was dispelled, and when occasion arose I seldom hesitated to impose myself on its attention.

Although the Employers’ Liability Bill was in the care

of Mr. Dodson, and owed much to his able assistance in the various stages of its progress through Parliament, yet the technical part of the work fell entirely to the share of Sir Henry James, the Attorney-General, and Sir Farrer Herschell, the Solicitor-General. The Committee stage of the Bill was fought with great persistency by some of the large employers, assisted by able legal members of the House. Despite the strenuous opposition the Bill became law in January, 1881. This was a great triumph for the trades-unions, which for fourteen years had persistently agitated for the recognition of the principle, and had undergone the searching ordeal of the Select Committee of 1876-7. We were not fully satisfied with the Act, which possessed some glaring defects, as we had not failed to point out during its passage through Parliament. For example, it did not put an end to the doctrine of "Common Employment," which, even after twenty years more of ceaseless effort, still flourishes to a certain extent. At the same time, we fully recognised that it established a number of great and broad principles upon which a further superstructure could be erected in subsequent years.

I did not feel disposed to rest content with this legislative triumph, but turned my attention to a fruitful cause of dissatisfaction among my constituents. At that time all Quarter Sessions business relating to the townships of the Potteries had to be transacted at the county town of Stafford, nearly twenty miles distant. When the facts of the case had been brought

before me, I approached the Home Secretary with the request that Hanley, the central town of the Potteries district, might be constituted a Quarter Sessions town. This concession obtained, I further urged that Mr. Brinley, who belonged to an old family in the neighbourhood and practised on that circuit, should be appointed the first Recorder. In this I was also successful ; and the first meeting of the Quarter Sessions was inaugurated with much ceremony. I took great pleasure in my success in this direction, which entirely disproved the theory that a Labour representative could be of no service to the general and commercial interests of his constituency, and would confine his attention to voicing the desires of the working classes only.

During that Parliament many enactments affecting the Labour cause were successfully carried. The first was the Merchant Seamen's Payment of Wages Act, which abolished the penalty of imprisonment for breach of contract in the case of seamen, and substituted for the old system of Advance Notes, which it made illegal instruments, a system of Allotment Notes, enabling sailors to make remittances to their relatives and to open accounts at the Post Office Savings Bank ; shipowners were also compelled to pay all wages within two days of a ship's arrival in port. Another beneficial section made the granting of licences to seamen's lodging-houses conditional on the character of the landlord. A second Act also related to the mercantile marine, and promoted the

safety of the sailor by some stringent regulations concerning the transport of grain cargoes, which must now be carried in bags or longitudinal bulkheads.

To give a rough notion of the multifarious character of the work of the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades-Unions, I will enumerate a few of the matters which it fell to my lot as secretary at this time to deal with.

Public attention was called to the blood-poisoning in the wool-sorting trade, and the Government was induced to make inquiries.

Complaints reached the Committee that the contents of some books in use in National Schools were prejudicial to the cause of trade combination, so an interview was arranged with Archbishop Tait, then Primate of England, with the result that the offending books were withdrawn from circulation. Although the deputation which waited upon his Grace the Archbishop at Lambeth Palace on this occasion was composed of men who were far from being noted for their Anglican proclivities, yet Archbishop Tait received them with the remarkable graciousness for which he was justly celebrated. No deputation could have received a warmer welcome, obtained a more patient hearing, or experienced a readier desire to meet its request. The correspondence between his Grace and myself which led up to the interview was a fitting prelude to so pleasurable an interchange of courtesies and so satisfactory a result.

Our attention had often been called to the

frequency of fatal accidents caused by entrusting steam-engines and boilers to unqualified and ill-paid men. Accordingly, the Committee introduced a Bill requiring those in charge of such machinery to hold certificates of competency in all cases where they had been employed on such work for less than two years. Although several Bills dealing with boiler explosions have since been passed, the root question—*viz.*, the competency of the men in charge—has not yet been settled by the legislature. Probably the Workmen's Compensation Act of 1897 will induce many employers to exercise greater caution in the selection of men for this important work.

A subject entirely different in character which took up much of the Committee's time was the "oversizing" of cotton goods in Lancashire. It was alleged that this practice was bringing British goods into great disrepute in the Eastern markets, and that the humidity of the weaving-sheds necessary to incorporate the foreign substance into the cotton goods inflicted serious and often permanent injury to the health of the workers. After innumerable memorials, public meetings, resolutions, and deputations to the Government, the Home Office was induced to send a medical officer from the Local Government Board, together with an experienced factory inspector, to inquire into the matter, with the result that the complaints of the workers were admitted to be substantially correct. A committee of experts was appointed to investigate the whole subject; but a sudden

change of Government prevented immediate legislation, and seven or eight years elapsed before effect could be given to the reforms we suggested.

In 1883 Mr. Chamberlain, as President of the Board of Trade, introduced a Bill relating to deep sea fishing. Among other regulations it contained a clause requiring skippers engaged in the deep sea fisheries to hold a Board of Trade certificate, and also to keep a log of accidents and loss of life at sea, as well as a record of punishments, payment of wages, and other matters pertaining to the interests of the man before the mast. Another beneficial clause provided that Board of Trade officers should act at each port *in loco parentis* for boys without parents or proper guardians who wished to become apprentices on fishing-boats. The Parliamentary Committee exerted all its influence to back up this measure affecting a large class of workers, and it became law. I did my utmost to secure the insertion of a clause making it compulsory for a first mate to hold a certificate ; but in this I failed, although this useful addition to the law was legalised some years later.

The reform of the Patent Laws and the laws relating to imprisonment for debt had long commanded the attention of the Committee. Both questions were taken up by Mr. Chamberlain, and Bills were brought in to deal with them in the session of 1883. This was the first session in which a Grand Committee of the House of Commons on Trade and Law was constituted. I was appointed a member of this Committee. Close

application and unflagging attention to the business in hand were absolutely essential to follow these two measures intelligently ; and when it is remembered that in those days the House frequently sat till three or even four o'clock in the morning, it will be understood that my first experience of Grand Committee work was sufficiently trying. Eventually, by distributing the aggregate cost of taking out a patent over a number of years, the Patent Laws were rendered much less prejudicial to the needy inventor ; while in the matter of the Bankruptcy Law I was enabled to carry an amendment by which, in the case of the bankruptcy of an employer, a working man became entitled to the same compensation as a clerk—*viz.*, four months' wages. The same amending measure raised the value of household goods, tools, etc., exempt from seizure for debt from £10 to £20. I also took a share in passing a Bill introduced by Mr. Samuel Morley to prohibit the payment of wages in public-houses. It fell to my lot to pilot this measure in its later stages through the House.

CHAPTER VII

A CHAPTER OF REFORMS

NOT long after these events I was called upon to play the *rôle*, sufficiently common in these days, of Special Commissioner. This was not in the capacity of a journalist, but in the interests and at the direction of the Parliamentary Committee. For seven years incessant complaints had reached the Committee from the "Black Country" concerning the condition of the men and women employed in the nail-, nut-, bolt-, and chain-making industries. After careful investigation of the whole question and frequent consultations with representatives of these trades, the Committee decided to draw up a Bill prohibiting the employment in the forges of girls under fourteen years of age. This Bill secured the first place on a Wednesday afternoon in May, 1883; and that I might be strengthened in my advocacy of the measure by first-hand information, I was instructed to make a personal investigation. In this work I was accompanied by a workman, the acting-secretary of a local trades-union, and also by a journalist, whom at my suggestion the editor of *The Daily News* deputed to write up the subject. Great care was necessary to keep the news of our

visit from leaking out in advance, because it was notorious that the hired children in the little smithies mysteriously and rapidly disappeared whenever it was rumoured that an inspector or an inquisitive stranger was approaching.

We started on our tour of inspection from Birmingham early in the morning, and by this means were able to cover a large part of the district before any warning of our presence could be communicated to the workshops. What we saw amply justified the proposals contained in the Committee's Bill. In many cases we found children of both sexes and of ages ranging from tender years to fifteen or sixteen, scantily clothed and badly fed, working together in one tiny smithy about the size of an ordinary cottage wash-house. They were barely instructed in the first elements of education ; while the pittance they earned bore not the remotest proportion to the sacrifice thus offered at the altar of cheap goods.

I visited one poor little wisp of a mother between six and seven on a raw February night. She was making what seemed to me an endless chain, for as fast as she had finished one piece of work, another confronted her. I was almost amazed that she did not use the last embers of her vitality to put an end to an existence as hopeless and confined as that of any convict condemned to life imprisonment at Portland. Yet all her week of ceaseless labour brought her was seven shillings, from which must

be deducted cost of firing, charge for use of tools, and a weekly payment to the woman who took care of her last baby during the working-hours. These deductions left a remuneration of no more than three shillings and sixpence for six days' strenuous labour of a character only fitted for muscular men.

Elsewhere I found a bevy of girls engaged on making spikes some eight inches long out of bar-iron nearly an inch in diameter. The proprietor of this shop scowled savagely when I entered, and to my civil inquiry whether he did not think this rather heavy work for young girls, gruffly answered with a negative emphasised by an oath. Now, to cut bar-iron of this thickness into lengths requires the expenditure of considerable force. In the first place, one has to up-set it sufficiently to form a head, and then to hammer the other end to a point. For this purpose the girls were required not only to wield a heavy hammer with one hand whilst manipulating the tongs in the other, but also to employ the right foot on a treadle, which set in motion an instrument called an "Oliver." This machine consisted of a treadle-lever which actuated a heavy hammer in addition to the one wielded by the right hand; in other words, the "Oliver" supplied the place of a second right hand, the only difference between it and the human "striker" being that it required no wages. In my opinion, this duplication of physical force would have entailed too great a strain on a sturdy man, let alone a young girl of fourteen. The employer

asseverated that the work was perfectly easy, and that I was deceived by appearances, ending in an invitation to try for myself. Laying my pipe on a bench and doffing my coat, I seized the tongs, gripped the bar-iron, blew the bellows, and heated the metal. Then carrying the red-hot bar to the anvil, I wielded the hammer with all my force until I had formed the point of the bolt, avoiding the use of the "Oliver," which needed long practice to manipulate properly. When I had finished the bolt I threw it into a corner, exclaiming : "There you are ! I have done what you wanted, and I should not like to stand ten hours a day at the work even with the aid of the 'Oliver.'" The man stared in disappointed amazement, and could only mutter, "Ay, maister, thee's done that work afore to-dee !"

What the cunning rascal expected to see, and what would have inevitably happened to an unpractised person, was this. To the onlooker it appears a simple matter to take a piece of iron out of the forge, lay it on the anvil, and hammer it into shape. But, as a matter of fact, if the iron is not kept exactly level upon the anvil in the place where the hammer strikes it, nothing will prevent its flying out of the grip of the tongs, and probably inflicting a serious wound upon the striker's face. But the reader will remember that I had worked for a considerable time in a blacksmith's shop during my youth ; so the old instinct came back at a moment's notice, and I recalled without effort the one essential precaution, and thus was able

to finish the job without injury and without gratifying the genial proprietor's desire.

Before the date of the second reading of the Bill, which I was appointed to move, I provided myself with a miniature model of this "Oliver," fashioned of wood. By holding it in my left hand and manipulating the lever with the fingers of my right hand I could demonstrate the principles on which the machine worked. When the day arrived I carried this model into the House of Commons before the Speaker had taken the chair, and placed it beneath the seat I intended to speak from. During my speech, when I arrived at the point where I was protesting in the strongest terms against the use of the "Oliver" by women, and especially by young girls, I produced the model from beneath the bench and exhibited its working to the amused and startled House, carefully explaining to the Speaker that the machine was perfectly harmless and would not on any account "go off," an assurance not unnecessary in those days of dynamite explosions and Fenian conspiracies.

This, I believe, was the first occasion on which the Mother of Parliaments had received an object-lesson. Among many other journalistic comments, Mr. Punch took the opportunity of dealing divertingly with the matter. I venture to reproduce the comments from the diary of "Toby, M.P." (*Punch*, May 19th, 1883).

"*Wednesday*.—'I knew what would happen, when I let Playfair bring in those pots of Oleo-Margarine,' the Speaker said this evening, as Lady Brand gave

us a cup of tea. "“They’re only little ones,” Playfair urged. “Yes,” I said; “that’s true enough. If they were the size of a sponge-bath, of course you wouldn’t bring them in.” But I weakly yielded; and now here’s Broadhurst brought in a nail-making machine, which he calls an Oliver, and works away to illustrate the motion for the second reading of a Bill to amend the Workshops Act.’

“‘Couldn’t you have got Winn to have given him a Rowland for his Oliver?’ I said, seeing the Speaker was really distressed.

“‘No,’ he answered sadly; ‘I Winn-a do. The thing must be met by an Order of the House. It’ll grow till place becomes sort of workshop, and we’ll have to build a shed on the site of the old Law Courts to keep the materials for illustrating speeches. We shall have Labouchere next bringing in a cobbler’s stall and showing how they make boots in Northampton, whilst he pleads the right of the constituency to have two representatives.’

“House a little startled when Broadhurst first produced his machinery. Thought it might have something to do with explosions. But only made nails. Most interesting process. You put a piece of iron-piping in at one end, turn a handle, and ten-penny nails flow in abundance from other end.

“‘Dear me,’ said Bobby Spencer, who over the ring-fence of his collar watched process with childish delight. (Subsequently, in cloak-room, tried his hand with machine and made a few nails for private circula-

tion only). 'Really charming ; but should have thought it would have brought down the price of nails. Tenpence apiece seems a good deal, don't you know.'

"Thing sure to spread. Daresay, in moving Agricultural Holdings Bill to-morrow night, Dodson will have a collection of spades, mowing machines, steam-ploughs, and a few drain-pipes. Interesting in its way. Makes House a sort of superior Polytechnic ; but likely to become inconvenient as custom grows. Speaker's quite right. He ought to have put down his foot on Playfair's pots.

"*Business done.*—Miscellaneous. Threw out Broadhurst's Bill, Oliver and all, by swinging majority."

One of the chief factors in procuring this defeat was the action of the Women's Rights people. My main object was to prevent by legislation the employment of girls under fourteen in these workshops. As their parents could not afford to support them until that age, the girls would be sent out as domestic servants, or in some other capacity less degrading and more profitable than bolt-making. But the fine ladies who desired political enfranchisement were up in arms on behalf of the rights of women to become bond-slaves before they reached maturity. So for a time these people succeeded in binding the chains of their unsexed sisters still tighter ; but it affords me some measure of consolation to remember that more than ten years afterwards the representatives of the bolt-makers came to the Parliamentary Committee appealing for assistance in the amelioration of the lot

of the women employees, and that when asked by me what would be the most effective manner of remedying their lot, they unanimously declared that no proposal submitted to them would accomplish their object so successfully as the Bill I had introduced in 1883.

In the same session Sir Henry James brought forward his Corrupt and Illegal Practices Bill, and when the House went into Committee upon it I moved an instruction that the official expenses of the Returning Officer should be charged to the local rates and not to the candidates. I divided the House, but was beaten by a two to one majority. This result was due to Mr. Gladstone, who pointed out that the insertion of such a clause would be highly inconvenient ; but he went on to promise that if I introduced a separate Bill embodying such a clause he would give it his support, and he believed it would receive a large measure of favour in the House. Acting on this hint, I subsequently introduced a Bill on these lines, but the luck of the ballot was against it, and I could not secure an evening for its consideration. Later on, at his request, I handed over the charge of the measure to Mr. Sydney Buxton, who hitherto has met no better fortune than I did.

At this time my work began to tell severely upon me. My duties both in the office of the Parliamentary Committee and in the House itself increased in magnitude almost daily. The office was a place of call for many foreign students of the economic and political conditions of Great Britain, Americans being

the most frequent visitors. This demanded the expenditure of much time, the one thing I could least afford to spare, and I was confronted with the impossibility of keeping the routine work of the office up to date. Accordingly, I hired a clerk from a neighbouring establishment. He was a pensioner from a Government office, possessing great ability, a thorough knowledge of French, and was, in fact, a scholar and gentleman. Unfortunately, he had one fault which nullified all his good qualities—he was too fond of the bottle! Many a time did I supply the miserable creature with clothes and food, but as often the former rapidly disappeared to the nearest pawnshop to supply the wherewithal of drink. At last he was overcome by a forgetfulness of the rights of property, a lapse from the paths of rectitude which placed me in a most difficult position. I gave him notice to leave; but his earnest pleading and his oath of reformation broke down my determination, and I allowed him to remain. But a repetition of the fault finally severed our association.

By great good fortune I had introduced to me a young man who remained with me until his deeply lamented death in 1893. For the first time in my life I experienced the benefit of having an assistant in whom I could repose absolute confidence, and on whose work I could rely. He was a strange young man, utterly unlike the average youth. Possessing considerably more means than I did, he was unaffected by the meagre salary I

could afford to pay. His one object in life was to serve me to the best of his ability, and I can truthfully say that no man ever received more thorough devotion than he displayed to me. When he first came to me he had had no experience of office work and was extremely retiring and shy. He had, however, learnt shorthand, and soon became the fastest and most accurate stenographer I have ever dictated to. He could also readily read and write in the French language, and after a time, though in a less degree, in German. His attachment to me became so great that soon he filled the place of a devoted son rather than a hired secretary. Not only was his assistance a great relief to myself, but it was a decided advantage to the trades-unions of the country. My salary had been advanced to £150 in 1881, and ultimately to £200, but out of this I had to pay for such office help as I required, so that to obtain the services of one so qualified as Mr. Maxwell in return for a merely nominal remuneration was an extraordinary piece of good fortune. His knowledge of French was particularly useful, and saved the Committee and myself much time and money. It often happened that callers at the office had but a scanty knowledge of English, but nearly all could speak French. Hence Mr. Maxwell's presence made communication easy.

While we were making more or less headway in Parliament with the measures I have mentioned, the cause of Labour was not at a standstill in the great world outside St. Stephen's. The highly successful

meetings of an International Trades-Union Congress held in Paris in October, 1883, gave ample evidence of the healthy state of the movement. Delegates from Unions in France, Italy, Spain, and Germany were present, and the British trades were fairly represented. The Parliamentary Committee sent Mr. Bailey, its Chairman, Mr. Burnett, its Treasurer, and myself; and other British delegates were present. The Standing Orders regulating the procedure of this gathering were, generally speaking, modelled upon those of the British Trades Congresses.

It fell to my lot to conduct most of the correspondence between the English delegates and our French hosts, and I took care to stipulate that as far as possible Sunday meetings should be avoided. There was, it is true, a reception held on Sunday night; but attendance was optional, and some of us never went near it. Several evenings were devoted to large public meetings in the industrial quarters of Paris, and on every occasion these were crowded with an enthusiastic audience. Unfortunately, their success was somewhat marred by the interruptions of the extreme wing of the Labour Party in the city, whose leaders were chiefly of Italian birth and imbued with Anarchist ideals. Scenes of the utmost confusion frequently occurred, the frenzied shouts and utter indifference to the calls of the Chair being a revelation to the phlegmatic British workman.

Some of these scenes were highly amusing. I remember in particular one Italian who presented himself

at two successive meetings, and mounting the platform, tore open his shirt and vest. Pointing to the wounds on his breast received in fighting the battles of Liberty, he declaimed at the top of his voice against capitalists and *bourgeoisie* alike. This performance, though highly dramatic, was unwelcome to the greater part of the audience, who had assembled to hear about the progress of Labour in different parts of the world.

The only delegate who was master of two languages was an Italian workman who spoke French moderately well. The speeches of the rest had to be translated, which in some cases was an advantage, but in others the contrary. This made the proceedings slow, and the frequent interruptions often prevented the full number of speeches being delivered. Nevertheless, our ignorance of French in no way prejudiced our audiences against us, as the hearty receptions we met with proved ; and with wonderful intuition, due, no doubt, to the quickness of the Gallic mind, the people managed to cheer again and again at precisely the right points.

After hearing nothing but French for eight or nine hours daily for nearly a fortnight one could not help picking up many words, and on the occasion of my speaking at a public meeting in the Belleville Arrondissement—formerly Gambetta's constituency—I ventured my first two words in French before the public. The chairman of the meeting had been a working engineer, had become a member of the Paris Municipal Council, and had played a prominent part in the Commune. When the Commune was sup-

pressed by M. Thiers' Government the engineer escaped to London, where he spent several years in English workshops. He consequently spoke English well, and delivered a most elaborate oration, introducing me as a stonemason who had become a member of that most aristocratic Assembly, the Parliament of England. He then assured his audience that I could not speak a word of French, but promised that my speech should be translated by a gentleman present for the purpose. When I began with a few words of French evidently well enough pronounced to reach their understanding, the whole meeting rose in a body and cheered tumultuously, till I was obliged to beg the chairman to inform the audience that my vocabulary was exhausted, an announcement that elicited as loud a cheer as my French introduction. Before the meeting was half-way through the Italian element made its presence felt, and the scuffling and noise which ensued turned what might have been a successful meeting into a bear-garden. From the platform it looked as though murder was being committed ; but when the combatants were at length separated, and I was expecting to see a whole heap of corpses, to my surprise not a swollen face or a spot of blood was to be seen.

I shall always look back with pleasure upon this visit to the French capital, because it gave me an opportunity of making the acquaintance of the late Mr. George Morland Crawford, the Paris correspondent of *The Daily News*, and his distinguished

wife. Through their kindness I met several Frenchmen of note. I was especially delighted to obtain an introduction to M. Clémenceau, who was present at a breakfast party at Mr. Crawford's house. I was greatly impressed with M. Clémenceau's strength of character, and it was a keen pleasure to renew the acquaintanceship a few years later in London.

Altogether, we regarded this Congress as the most successful effort hitherto made to bring about an international trades-unionism. But, for my part, I always despaired of any absolute unity between the workers of Europe being brought about by the agency of federated associations like the British Trades-Union Congress. I felt assured that a more practical mode of procedure would be for the trades of each country whose products competed with each other in the world's markets to enter into friendly relations, and, if possible, to regulate some of the conditions under which such competition was conducted. Later on this idea was partially adopted by the textile trades of Northern France and England, and it was still further developed by the conference of English, French, German, and Belgian miners—a gathering which has become an annual affair, I believe to the benefit of all concerned.

The Congress attracted attention throughout Europe, and the Press of most countries published leading articles dealing with our proceedings. Especially was this the case in this country, where nearly every paper, dailies and weeklies alike, devoted much space to the subject.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PROGRESS OF LABOUR QUESTIONS

✓ THE year 1884 was full of activity in the world of politics so far as the trades-unions and the industrial world generally were concerned. First ✓ and foremost stood the demand for assimilation of the county to the borough franchise. Mr. Gladstone's Government had enjoyed three years of power, which had been employed to good advantage for the welfare of the people. But already the political watchman could see signs of the coming sunset ; and warned by these tokens, the representatives of Labour felt that no time must be lost if the desired extension of the franchise was to become anything beyond a dream. Conservative workmen joined with their Liberal fellows in the desire to see equality in relation to the ballot-box between town and country. Thus in the ranks of the labouring classes there reigned practical unanimity on this question. It was desired to make this state of affairs known to Mr. Gladstone, and to assure him that whatever constitutional steps his Government might see fit to take in the coming session, he could rely on the undivided support of the people.

At the behest of the Trades-Union Congress a national deputation, representing every class of male worker from all parts of Great Britain, was organised. It was the largest, the most representative, and the most successful thing of the kind I have ever been responsible for.

The Committee found no difficulty whatever in obtaining a sufficiently numerous deputation; the trouble was to regulate the number of those desiring to be present and to keep it within manageable bounds. Then there was the verification of each delegate's credentials, and the task of keeping them informed of the arrangements. Another arduous duty was the selection of speakers by the Committee; it was essential to keep the numbers down, and yet every interest had to be represented. Altogether the deputation numbered two hundred and forty, and the aggregate cost of the proceedings (each association represented bearing its quota of expenses) amounted to £500. We were received by Mr. Gladstone in the large Council-room of the Foreign Office, and everything went like clockwork. The speeches were short, sharp, and to the point; the whole proceedings occupied less than an hour. It was a memorable day's work, and its influence reached all political circles.

This deputation was followed in the summer by the striking Franchise Demonstration in Hyde Park. Thousands of agricultural labourers marched through the streets of London to the Park, where speakers

addressed them from seven platforms. Over one of these I had the honour of presiding. The procession assembled on the Embankment between Blackfriars and Westminster Bridge, whence it proceeded by St. Stephen's, Parliament Street, and Whitehall, to Hyde Park. As we passed along Whitehall I remember seeing Lord Carrington and a party of friends standing at an open window in his house; he greeted the procession with enthusiastic cheers, and waved his hand in token of encouragement. Among those at the window was the Prince of Wales, apparently deeply interested in the demonstration and pleased at its imposing appearance. His Royal Highness also waved his hand in recognition of someone known to him in the procession. So far as I am aware this is the only occasion on which a member of the Royal Family has practically taken part in a great political movement among the people. So enormous was the length of the procession that the rear did not enter the Park until some time after the formal proceedings had ended. For precision of movement, orderliness, and effective display it was, in my opinion, by far the finest demonstration of our time.

The Tory Party was enraged beyond measure; and Lord Randolph Churchill, in a speech at Edinburgh, was driven to suggesting that the movement had no strength or feeling behind it because it was unaccompanied by any outburst of popular passion! He apparently wished his audience to believe that if the

people had been in earnest in their demands, the railings of Hyde Park would have been levelled, as they had been twenty years earlier. I have no hesitation in saying that had the policy of Lord Derby's Government in 1866 been followed by the Liberal Administration of 1884, popular rights would have been asserted in a similar unhesitating manner. But in place of obstruction and resistance the Home Office and the police authorities offered every facility for the successful carrying out of the proceedings, and no damage was done to even the smallest shrub or flower in the Park.

I remember that a day or two after the demonstration Mr. Lowther rose in the House to ask Mr. Shaw Lefevre, the First Commissioner of Works, whether it was true that persons had been employed at the instance of the Government to remove some of the fencing in Hyde Park which would have obstructed the progress of the procession on the occasion of the demonstration ; and further, whether this work was done at the public expense. I immediately jumped up and inquired of the Commissioner, before he replied to the first question, whether it was true that many Government employees were employed all the year round for the purpose of keeping in order a riding-track called Rotten Row for the pleasure of a particular class of persons in the metropolis. This suggested to Mr. Furniss the humorous sketch which is reproduced here, and in which I am depicted riding a great war-horse bare-

backed, with a dumpy hat on my head and a short "cutty" in my mouth.

However, the Tory Party, recognising the weight of the movement, soon came to terms with the Government, and a Franchise Bill was passed. This was followed by an Act extending the hours of polling from four to eight o'clock at night, and by a redistribution of seats. Thus the General Election of



MR. BROADHURST IN ROTTEN ROW.

(From *Punch*, by kind permission of the Proprietors and Mr. Harry Furniss.)

1885 was fought under conditions which placed new and wide political power in the hands of the working classes. To many minds, even among prominent statesmen, this large extension of popular rights seemed to presage the introduction of continuous Liberal rule and the total demolition of the Tory Party. How such prophecies, confident enough at the time, have been falsified by the course of events, is patent to all.

But I must retrace my steps a little to refer to a

debate which closely affected a most important class of workers, and in which I took the keenest interest. In May, 1884, Mr. Chamberlain introduced a Bill providing greater security of life and property at sea. In a memorable speech of nearly four hours' duration he formulated one of the gravest indictments ever uttered against practices then in vogue in the mercantile marine. Many a ship, it was fearlessly asserted, would prove more profitable to her owner at the bottom of the sea than if she arrived safely in port. It was alleged that many a man had grown rich by the deaths of his under-paid victims who manned his rotten "coffin ships." The shipping interest in the House and out of it furiously opposed the measure, and fought it tooth and nail. Of course, the shipping trade contained then, as it does now, many of the noblest and best of men. But it was undoubtedly true that others were steeped in the foulest crime, and, like the ghastly monsters of the deep sea, battered on the corpses of the poor sailormen. The Opposition, however, succeeded in blocking the Bill in its second reading stage, and it was referred to the Royal Commission, whose report is lost in oblivion. Yet if the country had grasped the significance of a quarter of the terrible facts contained in Mr. Chamberlain's long speech, and had not been rendered apathetic by the continual reports of terrible shipping disasters which the newspapers contain, the conscience of the nation would have demanded the immediate passing of this beneficent measure.

About this time I was kept busily engaged by a great increase in the correspondence department of the Parliamentary Committee's work. Communications, mostly in the shape of requests for information and guidance, poured in from workers in the United States, Canada, the Australasian Colonies, and, to a more limited extent, from European countries, notably France, Germany, Denmark, and Italy. Copies of Acts of Parliament affecting Labour, draft Bills, and reports of the Standing Orders of the Trades-Union Congress were constantly despatched to various parts of the English-speaking world. Much of the success achieved by the organisation of Labour outside this country, especially among our own kith and kin, is due to the lead given by British working men, the encouragement they gave, and the hope they inspired.

In the meantime our propaganda outside St. Stephen's was being actively spread. The labours of the Parliamentary Committee were continually being brought under the notice of the workers in all parts of the country. Conventions of delegates representing various industries were frequently summoned at some central town, and I was generally invited to address them on the importance of work in Parliament, ending, of course, with an appeal for increased aid to carry on our labours. In many cases large public meetings were assembled for the same purpose. These efforts were not confined to England, for we soon found that the Scottish workman had a keen appreciation of the benefits to be derived from exercising pressure on

the House of Commons. At Greenock, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Dundee, and Edinburgh, I attended very successful trade meetings convened for this purpose.

I think it was in the winter of 1881-2 that a rather comic incident occurred. On my way from Glasgow to Aberdeen I encountered so severe a snowstorm that I was compelled to stop from Saturday night to Monday morning at Perth. Among my unfortunate fellow-passengers who took refuge from the storm in the same hotel was a Scottish minister on his way from Edinburgh to some remote country kirk, where he was to preach his trial sermon as a candidate for the ministry of that kirk. I vividly remember the reserve manifested at first by my clerical friend, and how it thawed under the genial influence of a hot supper. Seeing in me an obscure person of no importance, he proceeded in no measured terms to abuse Mr. Gladstone for some action he had taken in previous years relating to Church patronage in North Britain. By a progress of reasoning which baffled my wits to follow he explained that but for Mr. Gladstone's wickedness he could have been in possession of a living without having to undergo the abominable competitive process of trial sermons. As he continued to dwell upon the unwelcome prospect before him in the morning, and the examination to be undergone at the hands of the congregation, his description of the Grand Old Man's character grew still more violent and vituperative.

As became a humble layman, I sat silent for a

long time in the presence of this youthful instructor of mankind, until my patience was exhausted, when I gently informed him that in a week's time I was engaged to deliver a political address in the city of Edinburgh, and that I should feel it my duty to inform the audience of the kind of language indulged in by one of their theological students, adding that I was an ardent admirer and supporter of the great statesman. When he heard that I was also personally acquainted with Mr. Gladstone his dismay knew no bounds, and with an almost startling suddenness he stuttered out his recantation. He implored me to take no further notice of his language, whose strength he attributed largely to the adverse circumstances of the night and the prospective difficulties of the morrow. So earnest were his pleadings and so profuse his apologies that I at length suffered myself to be prevailed upon to give my word of honour not to repeat the incident to a Scottish audience, and this is the first occasion in which the story has been made public.

Next morning I was overwhelmed by a thousand civilities; he anticipated my slightest wish, and the intervals between looking after my comfort he devoted to hearty confessions of penitence and reiterated expressions of devotion to Mr. Gladstone and the Liberal Party. He was still engaged in this manner when I pursued my journey to Aberdeen, where, in spite of the severe weather, I found as large and enthusiastic audience as heart could desire.

From Aberdeen I proceeded to Dundee to keep an

engagement with the Trades of the town. It was still snowing hard and blowing lustily, but a fine gathering managed to assemble in one of the public halls. At half-past ten I crossed the River Tay in company with Sir John Leng to his hospitable mansion at Newport, and seldom have I more earnestly yearned for the end of a journey than I did that night. It was a pitch-dark night with blinding snow and an intense cold, while a strong east wind was sweeping over the two miles of river we had to traverse. So black was the night that it was impossible to see the land, and our only guide to the landing-stage was the sound of a large bell on the pier-end. Such occasions as this give a zest to a cosy room, a roaring fire, and other creature comforts, for which the homes of North Britain are so deservedly celebrated.

Altogether, I was not sorry, after filling my engagements at Edinburgh and Glasgow, to turn my face Londonwards ; though my recollections of the Scottish people were of the most grateful character, and I bore with me substantial tokens of their kindness and hospitality in shape of a handsome meerschaum pipe, the inevitable stone jar of Scotch whiskey, sundry tins of tobacco, and many complimentary Addresses presented by the Trades of the great city of the Clyde.

By the beginning of 1885 the Parliament of 1880 had spent its best powers, and in June vested interests once again proved their power by overturning the Government on the question of the increased taxation

of beer. A Conservative Government was formed, and Parliament dissolved, while a General Election was fixed for the following November. Despite the downfall of the Liberal Government, important progress was made in Labour affairs, notably in the matter of inspectors of mines, whose number the Parliamentary Committee had exacted a promise from the Government to increase, and who were reinforced by seven new inspectors. Attention was also called to the irregularity of permitting an agent of the Employers' Liability Assurance Association to act as coroner in the case of an inquest of a labourer killed during his employment. Although the Lord Chancellor had no control over the appointments of deputy-coroners, he gave expression to his opinion of the undesirability of such a proceeding, and thus prevented the recurrence of what might easily have become a public scandal.

But a still more important question with far-reaching results occupied the attention of the Parliamentary Committee in 1885. Complaints concerning the administration of the Employers and Workmen's Act of 1875 had frequently reached us from the northern and midland counties. It was alleged that summonses for breach of contract against employees, disputes as to wages, measurements or weights of work done, were heard before magistrates who were in most cases themselves employers of labour; and although any magistrate personally interested in a particular case as an employer would withdraw while the case was being heard, still, the other magistrates were probably either

engaged in the same branch of industry or a kindred one, or else were neighbours and friends of the interested magistrate. Under these conditions the workmen averred it was impossible to repose confidence in the impartiality of Benches thus constituted. At one meeting of the Committee, I remember, in 1884, Mr. Alfred Bailey, of Preston, a member of the Committee, a stalwart trades-unionist, and one of the most loyal, courageous, and devoted friends the Labour Movement ever possessed, exclaimed in his downright Lancashire fashion that the only way to the root of the difficulty was that Labour should have a representation on the Bench as well as Capital.

I perceived the value of the suggestion, but recognised the enormous difficulties to be overcome before it could be carried out. Still, I resolved to use all my powers to further this object, and privately set the proposal in motion in Government circles. Sir George Trevelyan happened to be Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and in that capacity had the power—if I could persuade him to exercise it—to create borough magistrates within the confines of the duchy from whatever class he thought proper. He was greatly startled by the daring of the suggestion, but as I pressed it with all my power, the preliminary shock gave place to a practical consideration of the matter. I felt that the outer crust had been penetrated, and rallied to my support Sir William Harcourt, Sir Henry James, and Sir Farrer Herschell.

In the report presented to the Trades-Union

Congress which met at Southport in 1885, the Committee had the satisfaction of announcing that, in consequence of these representations, Mr. Slatter, Secretary of the Manchester Typographers' Association, Mr. Birtwistle, Secretary of the Cotton-Weavers' Association of Accrington, and Mr. Fielding, Secretary of the Cotton-Spinners' Union, Bolton, had been placed upon the Commission of Peace in their respective boroughs. Thus one of the most remarkable departures from the custom and habit of centuries was consummated; public opinion readily grew accustomed to it, and the revolution that many excellent persons had anticipated never broke out. Since that time large numbers of workmen have been appointed Justices of the Peace in various parts of Great Britain. Speaking at a public meeting in Edinburgh a few years later Sir George Trevelyan alluded to this daring innovation in terms highly complimentary to myself, declaring that he looked back upon his action in this matter with the greatest satisfaction and pride.

But this was not the first nor solitary inroad upon the preserves of the privileged classes. I have already referred to the appointment of seven new inspectors of mines. In connection with the whole subject of Government inspectors the trades-unions had for many years claimed that their duties would be more effectively discharged if there was added to the staff a number of practical workers from the ranks of Labour. Resolutions were passed to this effect and

deputations organised, with the result that in 1881 Sir William Harcourt offered me the appointment of an assistant inspector. While fully appreciating the great honour paid to Labour by this offer, after full consideration I declined the appointment for myself, but submitted the name of Mr. J. D. Prior, then Secretary of the Amalgamated Carpenters' and Joiners' Association. He was accordingly offered and accepted the post ; and other appointments of a similar character speedily followed. Mr. J. W. Davis, Secretary of the Birmingham Brass-workers' Union, Mr. W. Paterson, Secretary of the Scotch Union of Carpenters and Joiners, Mr. Sedgwick, a member of the Boot and Shoe Riveters' and Finishers' Union at Leicester, and Mr. Birtwistle, junior, as well as one of the working man justices, who has since become a full inspector—all these names, with the exception of the last, were submitted by me to the Home Secretary as vacancies occurred, and all, I believe, performed their new duties with great satisfaction to their superiors.

At the time of committing these reminiscences to writing, I have just returned from a visit to Mr. J. D. Prior, whose work in the Factory Department is admitted on all sides never to have been surpassed in efficiency and good judgment, a quality particularly necessary in this kind of work in order to avoid administrative friction. My friend Mr. Paterson, after serving a year or two in this capacity, obtained the appointment of Chief of the Glasgow Fire Brigade,

a post which he still holds and in which he has met with remarkable success. The City Council have recognised his efforts in a manner highly complimentary and profitable to him. I refer to these facts with pride as evidence that when the Parliamentary Committee had the responsibility of recommending men to responsible positions, they have selected those best calculated to carry out satisfactorily the work of the departments to which they have been appointed, and to reflect credit upon the class to which they belong.

At a later date another appointment of a similar nature was offered to me by the Government. This was during the sitting of the Royal Commission on the Housing of the People, when a measure for the regulation of the conditions of life on canal boats had become law. I had taken considerable interest in the Bill, though the credit of its introduction belongs to the late Mr. George Smith, of Coalville, and I was offered the post of inspector under the Act with a salary of £600 a year and travelling expenses. The offer was a tempting one—an ample salary, a secure position for life, and pleasant work; but after the gravest consideration I declined it. I was deeply immersed in public work at the time of both a political and an industrial nature, and had in charge several important Labour questions in the House of Commons. It seemed to me I had no right to sacrifice these things to my private advantage and personal welfare. Many a time since I have considered my refusal a most

unwise step, and as year is added to year I am disposed to ratify that conclusion.

In the latter part of the session of 1885 the first successful attempt was made to gain a fair chance for fair contractors to compete for Government contracts. The department attacked was that of printing. The annual expenditure on printing amounts to vast sums annually, and only firms chiefly unsatisfactory to the worker had been successful in obtaining parts of this work. I brought the subject under the notice of the Treasury, and after some prolonged negotiations, arrangements were made which admitted the best-wages paying house to compete for a portion of the work. This was the origin of the fair wages movement in Government contracts, and it gave widespread satisfaction to the trade in London.

During 1880 considerable agitation had arisen among the fitters engaged in Government dockyards. The Fitters' Union alleged that much of the work done on warships by shipwrights was of such a nature as belonged naturally to the fitters, and was inefficiently carried out when committed to the hands of the shipwrights. This was asserted in particular of the bulkheads and water-tight compartments. I had been constantly referred to on this subject by the fitters, and had submitted several questions to the Admiralty concerning the complaints; ultimately I gave notice of a motion for the purpose of drawing the attention of the House to the matter. At that time Sir George Trevelyan was Secretary to the Admiralty. Before

making a speech on this subject I determined to acquire some technical knowledge and with my own eyes examine the work, and accordingly I went down to Chatham Dockyard, accompanied by Mr. Burnett, the Secretary of the Engineers' Association, who was able to coach me in the intricate parts of the work. My own mechanical knowledge was sufficient to assure me of the danger of buckled plates and the necessity of absolute accuracy of building and fitting in the case of water-tight doors, whose value entirely depended upon their capacity to fulfil their functions at a moment's notice. After inspecting two or three ironclads from stoke-hole to upper works I acquired sufficient information for my purpose; and when my motion came up the Government at once accepted my proposals and promised immediate investigation and reform. Sir George Trevelyan, who possesses an excellent wit, propounded to an admiring circle of Members the following conundrum: What is the difference between Broadhurst and Darwin? Answer: While Darwin was in favour of the survival of the fittest, Broadhurst advocated the supremacy of the fitter!

Sir George has always had a great reputation for happy quotations. I remember a striking example of this faculty which occurred a few years later than the incident I have just mentioned. He was dining with some friends in the House while the late member for East Edinburgh, Dr. Wallace, was speaking. A brother member entering the dining-room was sur-

zinger
punchy

prised to find Sir George Trevelyan when his eloquent countryman was on his feet, and inquired how it was that he, a Scotchman, was not in his seat. "Ah," replied Sir George, "you see we're Scots wha hae fra' Wallace fled!"

CHAPTER IX

MY VISIT TO SANDRINGHAM

SOON after I entered Parliament a conversation with the late Mr. J. Beale, the champion of popular local government in the metropolis, directed my mind to the question of the iniquitous system of building leases. My interest in the subject was increased by my own experiences both as tenant and recently owner, especially as my wrath had been raised by a notice from my ground landlord. I determined to take action in Parliament to draw attention to the grievances from which leaseholders suffered. The member for Hereford, Mr. R. T. Reid, now Sir Robert Reid, undertook to prepare a Bill on the subject and consented to his name being attached to it. In 1882 I succeeded in getting an afternoon debate on the subject in the House.*

When the Bill was first circulated I could not have reckoned on half a dozen votes in the House, but

* Some friends of mine living in a district where the life leasehold system (to which I will refer later) prevailed, had presented me with some striking photographs of cottages in various stages of dilapidation and utterly unfit for human habitation. These photographs I brought into the House, and during my speech submitted them to the Speaker and to Members of the House—the first occurrence of the kind, I believe, in the history of that Assembly.

so rapid was the progress made by the measure in popular favour that in the division on the second reading I found 111 supporters in my lobby. Of course I was overwhelmingly defeated; but a big question had been ventilated, and a variety of issues springing from this attempt to redress the leaseholder's grievances was brought before the public in consequence of my Bill. The first outcome was the formation of a Leasehold Enfranchisement Association, with branches all over the country, and the public was soon put in full possession of the facts of the case by the pen of Mr. Howard Evans, a journalist on the staff of the *Echo*. Other issues raised by the debate on my Bill included the taxation of ground-rents, and the unjust and sacrilegious effect of the leasehold system on Nonconformist places of worship in cases where no freehold sites were available.

My Bill found particular favour in places like London, Grimsby, Liverpool, Huddersfield, North and South Wales, and parts of Worcestershire, Devonshire, and Cornwall, and communications from the last three counties revealed to me a system of leasehold of whose existence till then I was totally ignorant, and which appeared to me peculiarly iniquitous. It was known as the "three life" system, and under it you purchased a site to be held during the lifetime of three persons nominated by the purchaser. At any time you could be called upon to prove the existence of any or all of the three lives. On the death of one, and in some cases

two, you were allowed, on the payment of a further sum, to nominate another life to fill the vacancy. When the last of the persons thus nominated died, the land and all you had placed upon it reverted to the original owner. The people heartily disliked this "three lives" system, particularly in Devonshire and Cornwall, and when I visited the West of England to explain my Bill and rouse a feeling of hopefulness in the West country, I was right royally received. A great gathering was held at Camborne, the miners' Division of Cornwall, men coming from long distances to attend it. The agitation spread rapidly and soon began to make its influence felt. A large landowner in the neighbourhood of Devonport headed a conciliation movement by offering land plots for a definite period instead of the uncertain tenure dependent on three persons' lives. Others speedily followed his example, and in a number of instances estates were offered in freehold plots in parts of the country where previously the "three lives" system had reigned supreme. Thus lasting and beneficial reform was obtained without the aid of legislation by the wholesome pressure of public opinion. At the same time the evil monster Monopoly still lives; he is only less aggressive than he formerly was.*

* In July, 1900, I attended a meeting of the Liberal delegates from all parts of that Division, held in Camborne to support the candidature of the present Member, Mr. W. S. Caine. I was then thanked by all I met for the work done for them eighteen years before, and was told there was scarcely such a thing known as new leases on the three lives tenure.

In order to enlighten the mind of the "man in the street" upon this question Mr. Reid collaborated with me in bringing out a small hand-book as an aid to its study. It formed one of the "Imperial Parliament" series edited by Mr. Sydney Buxton, M.P., and published by Swan Sonnenschein. The case for reform was stated by Mr. Reid with wonderful lucidity and its legal bearings indicated with excellent clearness. Whether there was ever any sale for the volume I do not know; at any rate, I have never received any profits from its sale, so I can scarcely look back upon this literary venture with any personal self-congratulation.

Some years later, while on a visit to Dorsetshire, I was informed of a particularly scandalous instance of the injustice of the leasehold tenure. A little community of Nonconformists had built a chapel on an estate near the place in which I was staying. When the lease expired the landowner, who had only recently succeeded to the estate, refused to renew it on any terms whatever. These poor people were compelled to find some other place to worship God in, and their little sanctuary, erected and maintained with so much sacrifice and love, was turned into a workshop for the estate carpenter. By a strange and tragic coincidence the first work done in the dismantled sanctuary was the making of a coffin for the landowner, who died almost immediately after evicting the Dissenters.

In other instances I was informed of the abominable

extortion of grasping landlords who, on the expiration of a lease, would impose heavy fines for its renewal, knowing well that the Nonconformists would sacrifice a great deal to retain their chapel, for unless the lease was renewed they would be unable to obtain another site in the neighbourhood. These cases, together with an incident to be related further on, led me to introduce a Bill giving to Nonconformist communities under certain conditions power to acquire, compulsorily, sites for chapels.

Mainly owing to the splendid work done by Mr. George R. Sims in the columns of *The Daily News*, the question of the housing of the poor was occupying public attention in a large degree when I entered Parliament. Railway extensions were being carried on apace, the displacement of large populations of the labouring classes was constantly occurring, and though much had been done to provide accommodation for the houseless in some parts of London, the inevitable distress and overcrowding had made the subject a burning question. Naturally my own experience gave me a keen interest in the matter, for I knew how largely the question of rent bulks in the domestic economy of the working classes. The rent problem, notwithstanding all the efforts of the philanthropists, still awaits a satisfactory solution. A man who earns thirty shillings a week has to pay about a fifth in rent. His travelling expenses to and from his work will usually amount to another shilling, so there he is with seven shillings a week the first and inexorable

charges on his income, leaving only twenty-three shillings to meet all the requirements of his family—food, clothes, medicine, coal, club, amusements, charity, and contributions to his place of worship. Add to this the period of non-employment during which rent must be paid just the same, and it will be admitted that the question of rent in the large urban centres is one of the gravest and most difficult problems the social reformer has to face.

I frequently put questions to the Government on the subject, and ultimately asked them to appoint a Royal Commission to investigate the whole question. Before my request could be granted the matter was taken out of my hands by Lord Salisbury, who placed a motion in the Orders in the House of Lords for the appointment of a Commission. The Government at once accepted the motion, and proceeded to form a Commission under the presidency of the Prince of Wales. Sir Charles Dilke was appointed Chairman, and among the members were the Marquis of Salisbury, Cardinal Manning, Lord Carrington, Lord Brownlow, Mr. Goschen, Mr. Samuel Morley, the Bishop of Bedford, Mr. Torrens, Mr. Godwin, Sir Richard Cross, and Mr. E. E. Stanley. I was also invited, and accepted a seat on the Commission. At the end of its sittings I succeeded in obtaining the signatures of a majority of the Commission to a resolution condemning the leasehold system. I also put in a memorandum of my own, suggesting a mode for the cheap and easy transfer of small properties through the agency of



"MR BROADHURST AND SOME OF HIS CONSTITUENTS."
(By kind permission of the proprietors of "Black and White.")

municipal authorities. This idea would have provided facilities for the exchange of small estates at a nominal cost, with perfect security to the title of the holding by means of a registration office.

It was while serving as a member of this Commission that I had the honour of being presented to the Prince

of Wales, and from that day till now I have received at his Royal Highness's hands unvarying kindness and consideration. The Prince invited the whole of the Commissioners down to Sandringham—in the first place, I presume, as an act of hospitality, but secondly that the Commissioners might inspect for themselves the cottages on the Sandringham estate. From various reasons I was unable to accompany them ; his Royal Highness was good enough to accept my apology, and wrote me a very pleasing letter to say so. The letter, which is written in the Prince's own hand, is so characteristic of his kindliness of heart and thoughtful consideration that I make no apology for quoting it in full :—

“SANDRINGHAM, *November 8th, 1884.*

“DEAR MR. BROADHURST,—

“Many thanks for your very kind letter. Both the Princess and myself are so very sorry that you are unable to pay us a visit here next week, but we perfectly understand and appreciate the reason.

“Believe me, truly yours,

“ALBERT EDWARD.”

A little later I received a further proof of his Royal Highness's goodwill. Hearing that I made it a rule not to dine out, and that I did not possess a dress-coat, the Prince of Wales renewed his invitation in a form which I could not refuse without being guilty of unpardonable boorishness. He assured me that arrangements would be made during my stay at

Sandringham to meet my wishes and insisted upon booking dates there and then.

I will not pretend that I accepted this offer of Royal hospitality with anything but the greatest delight. I spent three days at Sandringham with the Prince and Princess, and I can honestly say that I was never entertained more to my liking and never felt more at home when paying a visit than I did on this occasion. I arrived at Sandringham on Friday night and remained until the following Monday evening. On my arrival his Royal Highness personally conducted me to my rooms, made a careful inspection to see that all was right, stoked the fires, and then, after satisfying himself that all my wants were provided for, withdrew and left me for the night. In order to meet the difficulties in the matter of dress, dinner was served to me in my own rooms each night.

During the visit we walked and talked, and inspected nearly every feature of the estate, including the stables, the kennels, and the dairy farm, all of which strongly appealed to one who, like myself, was country bred. The Princess herself, with characteristic graciousness, showed me over her beautiful dairy. But what pleased me most was a visit we paid to several cottages on the estate. The Prince took an evident pride in the beauty and comfort of the homes of his people, and I was particularly struck by the scrupulous courtesy of his Royal Highness in obtaining permission from the house-

wife before crossing the threshold. To the dwellers in cities this may seem an observance demanded by the most elementary politeness, but those who, like myself, have lived in a country cottage know by experience how often this elementary rule is more honoured in the breach than the observance. In too many cases people march into the houses of the poor without a by-your-leave or the least apology for an ill-mannered intrusion on the privacy of the home. Again, I was pleased to find that the villagers we met on the road, though perfectly respectful, showed no sign of servility or obsequiousness in their manner of greeting the members of the Royal Family.

After a long walk round the farms, across some fields and back to the village by the roadway, the Prince took me into what is called the village club. The club is in other words the village public-house, the difference being that it is not conducted for profit. A high standard of conduct marks the administration of the establishment, and a similar behaviour is required from those visiting it. To prevent drunkenness a limited quantity of refreshment only is allowed to any one person in one day. The Prince invited me to partake of the refreshment of the house, and I was quite ready to comply. We had, I think, a glass of ale each and sat down in the clubroom, where we found several farm labourers enjoying their half-pints and their pipes. No excitement, no disturbance, no uncomfortable feeling, was evinced by those present. No condescension or

patronage was displayed by the Prince towards his neighbours and friends. The beer was very good and of a homely and acceptable flavour. Strong and plain but clean chairs and tables formed the furniture of the apartment. I remarked to the Prince that the chairs looked as though they were of the best build and strongest specimens of High Wycombe produce.

"Yes," he said, "they are firm seats ; many a politician wishes his was as safe."

Among other objects of interest I remember the Prince pointing out with pride a valuable present given to him by the people of Norfolk on the occasion of his wedding. I assured him that I clearly recollected both the occasion and the present, for I was then a working mason in the city of Norwich, and I had to lose a day's work, which, unfortunately, meant for me the loss of a day's wages. "But," said the Prince, "you are none the worse now, Mr. Broadhurst?" To which I answered that I was still four shillings out of pocket, the day's wages of a mason in Norwich at that time.

On Saturday night, before retiring, his Royal Highness consulted me about my wishes for Sunday morning. I told the Prince that I was not a member of the Established Church, but a Dissenter, and that I hoped to find a Methodist place of worship in the neighbourhood. He himself did not know of one, but assisted me by all means in his power to discover the whereabouts of the nearest chapel, which turned

out to be several miles from Sandringham in the direction of the coast. Thither I wended my way on Sunday morning, but found there was no service, only a Sunday school being held. I listened to the teaching a while and then returned to Sandringham. In the afternoon the Prince inquired how I had fared in the morning, and I took the opportunity to suggest that a chapel nearer the centre of the estate would be a great boon to such of the villagers as were Non-conformists. I reminded his Royal Highness that some of the stoutest patriots and most loyal citizens were to be found among hereditary Nonconformists, and that the Throne had no more valuable and trustworthy subjects than the great majority of Dissenters. The Prince took my remarks in very good part and thanked me for my words, especially as being spoken in the presence of his two sons. I must add that during my stay I had several conversations with the late Duke of Clarence and the present Duke of York, and found in both a total absence of affectation or haughtiness. I left Sandringham with a feeling of one who had spent a week-end with an old chum of his own rank in society rather than one who had been entertained by the Heir-Apparent and his Princess.

This visit, and the memory of the chapel in a back lane some miles away from the people, finally settled my determination to attempt some legislative remedy for this grievous disability under which Non-conformists were labouring. Accordingly I wrote an article which appeared in the first number of *The*

Methodist Times, a marked copy of which I sent to the Prince of Wales, who acknowledged it in kindly words. I followed this up with a Bill which I introduced in the next session. On the debate on the second reading Sir William Harcourt supported the Bill on behalf of the Government with all his power, but the Opposition talked it out.

The next occasion on which I was brought into contact with the Heir-Apparent was on the formation of the Council of the Imperial Institute. Soon after the sittings of the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Poor had closed, I received an invitation to attend a preliminary gathering to consider the proposal to erect a building which should represent the resources and the industries of the British Empire. I was chosen a member of the Council and of the Building Committee, and served on both bodies until the completion of the enterprise and its opening by the Queen in 1893. The Prince of Wales was Chairman of the Council, and the meetings were usually held at Marlborough House. When the plans and designs for the building were submitted for approval, I discovered that it was intended to use terra cotta dressings instead of stone. Against this proposal I made a determined stand. I used every means in my power to alter this arrangement, and I believe it was mainly due to the Prince's sympathy and support that stone dressings were eventually adopted. During the progress of the building operations I found that a portion of the best part of the stonework had been

sublet to a Derbyshire firm of quarry-masters. I at once brought the matter under the notice of the Building Committee. When invited to explain, the contractor asserted that London masons could not work that class of stone. I replied that this was absurd, and backed up my opinion by offering to show my capacity to work it, although many years had elapsed since I had last practised my craft. In the end the contractor had to give way, and the work was executed in London, to the great delight of the London masons, to the satisfaction of the architect, and to the advantage of all concerned—except, perhaps, the contractor.

In 1892 I served on the Royal Commission on the Condition of the Aged Poor. Lord Aberdare presided at the Enquiry, and the Prince of Wales was also a member and a constant attendant, and displayed a most keen interest in the Enquiry. In the winter of 1893 his Royal Highness had a few days' shooting within four miles of my Cromer home. During his visit he was good enough to send a message that, owing to unavoidable circumstances, he regretted he was unable to keep his intention of paying me a visit and taking a cup of tea in my cottage. He requested me, if I could conveniently do so, to meet him at the station on the morning of his departure. This I did, and I was greatly struck by the keenness with which he discussed some confidential proposals relating to the Draft Report of the Aged Poor Commission. To my wife, whom he had not met before, his

Royal Highness was exceedingly kind, expressing to her the pleasure he had derived from his acquaintance with her husband.

Another pleasing incident connected with the Prince occurred in 1889 when I founded the Cromer Golf Club. His Royal Highness, in response to my invitation, consented to act as patron and gave the first prize, a handsome silver bowl.

When an address was presented to the Prince by the Committee of Workmen who had conducted the Industrial Exhibition at the Agricultural Hall, I accompanied the Presentation Committee to Sandringham. The ceremony was exceedingly simple and pleasing, both to the givers and the Royal recipient. Business engagements compelled me to leave Sandringham earlier than the Committee, and when I arrived at the station I found that his Royal Highness was going to Ely by the same train. Directly he knew of my presence in the station he sent for me and insisted on my joining him in his saloon carriage, and I had a very pleasurable journey indeed.

In thus recording my meetings with the Prince of Wales I should like to make it understood that I have no purpose to serve. Many paragraphs have at times appeared in various publications respecting alleged, and in some instances partially true, incidents in the course of meetings between his Royal Highness and myself—hence this reference to them. In order to apologise for these references—if apology is needed—it should be mentioned that the two Royal Commissions

here referred to are, as far as I know, the only ones on which one so near the throne has served. I only desire to make known to those whom it may interest how, in all his intercourse with me, his Royal Highness showed the greatest kindness and consideration without the slightest trace of patronage or condescension. I have not usually given what are called "Royal Votes" in the House of Commons, and no favour was due to me in that respect. But I have at all times experienced from his hands such treatment as might be looked for from a high-minded and well-bred English gentleman.

Mr. Joseph Arch was a member of the Royal Commission on the Condition of the Aged Poor. Sandringham is in the centre of the division for which Mr. Arch then sat in Parliament. There was no member of the Commission with whom the Prince seemed to enjoy a chat or a joke more than with the representative of the agricultural labourers. I had some part in Mr. Arch's first and last contest in North-west Norfolk, and I think I may truly say that no estate in that constituency offered less opposition to his candidature than Sandringham did.

CHAPTER X

THE 1885 CAMPAIGN

THE Trades-Union Congress of 1885 held in Southport was looked forward to with considerable interest. The near approach of a General Election in which some millions of workers would exercise the franchise for the first time heightened the expectation of the trades-unionists in everything pertaining to political life. It was generally anticipated that the result of the elections would be a large increase in the number of Labour representatives in the Imperial Parliament. A Conservative Ministry had been formed in June, but the remainder of the session was almost entirely occupied with the routine business of winding up affairs preparatory to the national contest. One notable step, however, marked the existence of this interim Government. This was the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the condition of trade. For some years preceding a persistent agitation had been carried on in the country and kept alive by a small number of men who claimed to be suffering from lack of employment in the sugar trade, caused, as they alleged, by the competition

of Continental rivals who were aided by bounties from their Governments. This faction had constantly and violently attacked the Trades Congress, its Committee, and more particularly its Secretary. Attempts had several times been made to foist upon the Trades Congress bogus delegates representing this faction. But one of the Standing Orders of the Congress enjoined that all expenses of delegates attending the Congress should be borne by *bonâ fide* workmen's associations, and it required little subtlety to perceive that the funds for these so-called delegates of the sugar-workers might come from non-Labour sources.

For many years I had been the subject of bitter and unjustifiable abuse. Misrepresentations and calumnies were showered upon my head. Resolutions reflecting on my private character, which were alleged to have been passed at meetings of workpeople in clubrooms and other places, constantly appeared in a certain class of newspaper, but investigation always revealed the fact that these meetings were known only to small and interested cliques. At the Trades Congress held in London in 1881 some of these men had been forcibly ejected from the hall, and another had been obliged to withdraw by the order of the chairman. The centres of this disaffection were London and Clyde district. There existed more than a vague suspicion that behind these men and the sugar-refiners in whose interests they were agitating stood the Tory Party; and this suspicion was

strengthened by the careful manner in which many of the Conservative leaders avoided committing themselves to any opposition to a Protective system ; in so much that it was generally believed that if they possessed a majority and the Government side of the House they would not hesitate to impose countervailing duties on imported sugar. Only those who were behind the scenes in political life at the time can realise how potent and various were the weapons wielded on behalf of the Fair Trade Movement. The advocates of countervailing duties on sugar received considerable sympathy from Protectionists in other industries, with the result that the Conservative Government appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into the whole question of Fair Trade. But they were careful to pack this Commission with tried henchmen, including only one representative of Labour, Mr. Birtwistle, who was well known as a trusty supporter of the Conservative Party. I raised the question in the House of Commons, pointing out the one-sided composition of the Commission, and claiming that on such a question Labour should be adequately represented. As a result Lord Iddesleigh, the Chairman, invited me to join the Commission, an invitation that I refused point blank, feeling that its acceptance after I had raised the question would place me in an invidious position. Eventually Mr. Drummond, a London compositor, was appointed a member of the Commission, but as he, like Mr. Birtwistle, belonged to the Ministerial Party, this appointment did not

remove the objections to the composition of the Commission. It will be in the memory of many that after sitting for a year or two and gathering, doubtless, much useful information concerning the advantages of Free Trade, the Commission utterly failed to gain sufficient evidence to state a case for Protection, and its recommendations practically amounted to the advice to manufacturers to make the best of the existing conditions and rely on their own efforts, unsupported by bounties, to overcome commercial depression and re-establish the reign of prosperity. But the Conservative Party have apparently never forgiven my attack on this Commission and my refusal to act as a pawn upon it, and so deep-seated is this feeling that from that day to this no seat upon a Royal Commission appointed by a Conservative Government has been offered to me, though on one occasion at least Parliamentary usage entitled me to an invitation. I will cite two conspicuous instances of this survival of blind passion and prejudice.

In 1890 the German Emperor made proposals to the Governments of Europe to join in an International Conference on Labour Questions in Berlin. I felt that possibly much good, and certainly no harm, might accrue to the cause of Labour from such a Conference of the Powers, and I exerted all my influence to assist the matter. The proposal was not altogether original, for some years before, when Lord Granville held the post of Secretary for Foreign Affairs, overtures had been made to the same end which

emanated, if not from the Swiss Government itself, at least, from some influential citizens of the Alpine Republic. The suggestion came to me through the foreign correspondence on Labour questions which passed the Parliamentary Committee, and I immediately wrote to Lord Granville asking if any proposals of the kind had reached the British Foreign Office, and if so, whether there was any possibility of such a Conference being held. Nothing, however, came of it; but when I saw the proposal revived by a personage so energetic and influential as the German Emperor, I hoped for a more successful outcome. My interest in the matter was not so much personal as official. The longer hours of labour and lower scale of wages on the Continent operated unfairly against our countrymen in times of fierce competition. On the other hand, in several European countries the educational facilities for the people were certainly superior to English institutions. If these subjects were intelligently discussed, I was hopeful that considerable improvement in the conditions of the life of the labouring classes might result, and indirectly, that it might facilitate International Trades-Unionism. For these reasons I threw myself vigorously into the matter, exerted pressure on the Government to give favourable consideration to the proposal, and had several interviews with the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, urging him to advise that British delegates be sent to Berlin. In the end the Government accepted the proposal, and I at once set to

work to draw up a list of intelligent workmen representing the great industries most frequently in contact with Germany in neutral markets who would be fitted by their knowledge and business capacity to serve as delegates. The selection of the British representatives rested mainly with the Board of Trade, and I had interviews with the President of the Board of Trade on the subject of the *personnel* of the delegation. But out of the dozen names submitted by me only two—Mr. Burt, M.P., and Mr. Birtwistle—were chosen. Mr. Burnett, the Labour Correspondent of the Board of Trade, could, it was submitted, represent the iron trades, and in any case he would attend in his official capacity. Thus there were practically only two Labour representatives, the other members being drawn from the official and capitalist classes, a wise selection being Sir W. Houldsworth, M.P., and Sir John Gorst, M.P. As a matter of fact, I could not have attended the Conference had I been invited, for two reasons. My health was in too feeble a state to permit my undertaking the work ; and in the second place I had made up my mind to resign my secretaryship to the Parliamentary Committee at the end of that year, and was anxious to devote all my strength to the task of handing over the office to my successor without complications or arrears of work. Still, the fact remains that after practically forcing the Government to accept the proposal, taking infinite pains over the subject, and readily laying my knowledge and experi-

ence at their service, I was not even offered a place upon the Commission.

To take another flagrant example. In 1885 I introduced a Bill for the abolition of the tied-house system, and in the following year, at my instigation, a Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into this and kindred questions arising out of the liquor trade. I may say in passing that I reintroduced the Bill again after the General Election in July, 1895, and found that the interest in the measure was so keen and widespread that I was overwhelmed with correspondence from all parts of the country. Again, at the General Election of July, 1895, the Bill created considerable interest. Many candidates applied for information respecting the details of the Bill, and in a large number of constituencies the question exercised considerable influence. Some of the Liberal Members who survived the storm assured me that they owed their success to the support they gave to my proposals in regard to tied-houses more than to any other cause. I believe I am justified in saying that I was the first Member of the House of Commons to raise the question in a practical form. This by the way, but I am anxious to explain the prejudice excited against me. When, as I have said, a Royal Commission was appointed to deal with the question at my instigation, my claims to a seat were passed over in silence.

But to return to my doings in 1885. From the close of the Southport Congress to the closing of the

polling-booth in the last English constituency in the following November, I experienced the most severe period of prolonged and sustained exertion in speaking and travelling in the whole of my public career. On leaving Southport on September 14th, I proceeded to Chester, where I had promised to address a political meeting. It was here that quite unexpectedly occurred one of the happiest memories of my life. At Chester I met Lord Rosebery on his way to visit his chief at Hawarden. On the following day my Chester hostess arranged to drive my wife and myself over to Hawarden Castle, that we might have a look at the Liberal leader's famous residence. In Hawarden Park we met Lord Rosebery, who informed us that it was the desire of Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone that my wife and I should lunch at Hawarden Castle. Thus for the first and last time I had the honour of being entertained by the Grand Old Man at his country seat and of seeing him in all his glory amid his beloved books. Dressed in tweeds of old times well worn, trousers a little short and slightly frayed at the bottom, he presented a totally different appearance to his House of Commons costume. It was only on his approaching me that I noticed his clothes, which on an ordinary man would have been thought untidy. After the commencement of his conversation one did not see his covering, one only saw and heard his mind. To a greater degree than any other person I ever met he could, and did, adapt his talk and his subjects to the person he was addressing. What an

attainment! A very pleasant and instructive time I spent, for Mr. Gladstone played the host to perfection, pointing out all the views of interest in the park and the village, not omitting the fine old church. I remember just before we went into lunch Mrs. Gladstone whispered in my ear that I must on no account lead her husband into a political conversation, as he was suffering from hoarseness consequent on a severe cold. I faithfully observed her injunction; but to her dismay and the entertainment of his guests directly we sat down Mr. Gladstone launched into a conversation, or rather a monologue, and despite all his wife's appeals he talked unceasingly until the close of the meal. I returned to Chester that evening loaded with flowers gathered by Mrs. Gladstone, and full of delightful memories of the visit.

At this time of my life I believe I could have worked from one week's end to another without an hour's sleep and no rest but the refreshment of a cold bath and change of garments; but my stamina was pretty severely tested by the next few weeks of 1885. In the early part of October I attended the annual gatherings of the National Liberal Federation at Bradford, and addressed several of the public meetings. Thence I proceeded direct to Scotland to fulfil a series of political engagements, the first of which was at Dumbarton, where Mr. R. T. Reid, Q.C., was contesting the division against the sitting Member, Sir Archibald Orr Ewing. I changed trains at Glasgow and took a local train to Helensburgh, on

the Clyde. The house where I was to stay was situated at the head of Loch Long, about sixteen miles from the station. I left Bradford at nine o'clock in the morning and only arrived at my destination about midnight. Those who know this part of Scotland will remember that the line to Helensburgh for some distance runs close to the riverside. During the afternoon a strong gale sprang up from the west, and when we reached Clydeside the tide was running up strongly before the wind, and in the more exposed parts beat against the train and even invaded the carriages. By the time we arrived at Helensburgh both wind and rain had rather increased than moderated, and the conveyance which was to take us to our destination at the head of Loch Long and had left there in fine weather earlier in the day was a pair-horse phaeton—not the most suitable vehicle for a night of driving rain and blustering wind. My niece, who accompanied me, the coachman, and I held a council of war as to whether we should proceed or stay at Helensburgh all night. A station official expressed the opinion that the weather showed signs of moderating, and this hopeful view, coupled with the coachman's pleading that our non-arrival would cause grave anxiety, decided me to make the attempt. Selecting such garments as would offer the most resistance to cold and wet from our luggage and hastily donning them, we took our seats in the carriage, my niece being so effectually swathed in wraps that she had to

be lifted bodily into the phaeton by a railway porter. Like the railway, the road runs for the most part alongside the water, in many parts only a thin wooden rail separating the path from the black waters of the loch. At one point in our journey where the darkness seemed more than usually intense the horses strayed from the road and seemed to plunge into loose ground or water. It was only by exerting his utmost strength and skill that the coachman averted a serious accident and succeeded in bringing us back to the highway.

The downpour of rain somewhat lessened in volume, but the gale continued to rage in an awe-inspiring manner. To communicate with the driver who sat immediately in front of me I had to put my mouth close to his ear and bawl my loudest. Presently we left the lochside and climbed a hill with apparently nothing to guide us but the uncertain flicker from the carriage lamps. By care, and the remarkable keenness of vision displayed by the coachman, we surmounted the rise and returned again to the lochside and the thin white rail which acted as a guide. But our difficulties were not yet over, for suddenly we drove into the midst of a herd of cattle which had come down from the hills for shelter. Startled by the carriage lamps they bolted in front of the horses, and for a long distance persisted in running ahead of us, so that we could not pass them. Then at intervals we came upon foaming and swollen streams thundering down from the heights above

to the loch ; these had a terrifying effect, at any rate on me, though the horses appeared to pay no heed to them. At last we got clear of the cattle, the road improved, and presently, to my great relief, a whistle from the coachman announced that we had reached the lodge gates. I never remember feeling so grateful for the shelter and rest of a warm bed as I did that night. In order to save my niece from undue anxiety I had so adjusted her wraps as practically to blindfold her, and all through the night drive I had congratulated myself on the manoeuvre. But when recounting the incident next morning at the breakfast-table she shattered my delusion completely by saying that, suspicious of some object in being thus blindfolded, she had managed to remove the wrap, and had thus been able to realise very vividly what might have happened had we been in the hands of a less skilful driver.

After a day's rest Mr. Reid and I started on his campaign. Although a Scotsman, he was practically a stranger to the Dumbartonshire division, while his opponent, who had sat for the constituency for many years, was a large employer and well known in the district. Electioneering in those mountainous regions, where railways are few and far between, is hard work, and it was necessary for Mr. Reid to visit as many of the villages as possible. For example, we had arranged to address a meeting in the Vale of Leven at seven o'clock on Saturday night. To reach the place we had to leave Mr. Reid's house

at two in the afternoon and travel by road, rail, and water. When the meeting was over at ten, a drive of some twenty miles confronted us. As was not unusual, the night turned out dark and stormy, and as the road lay for a long distance by the side of Loch Lomond I had an opportunity of repeating the experiences of the night of my arrival. On this occasion we did not reach home till one o'clock on Sunday morning, when we were quite ready for a well-earned dinner. Nothing would have induced me to stay so long in the midst of so much rain and wind, which deprived mountain and loch alike of their charm, and left nothing to view but a damp grey mist, but for my love of the work and my deep and everlasting regard for one of the noblest and most courageous of men then in the field in the interest of progress. These journeys were not the longest undertaken during my ten days' stay.

From Dumbartonshire I crossed to East Lothian to take part in the contest which Mr. Haldane was waging against Lord Elcho in Haddingtonshire. Communication between the places of meeting proved to be much easier in the Lothians than in Dumbartonshire. The gatherings addressed were admirable in every respect, and before I left I had the satisfaction of knowing that Mr. Haldane was making a great fight of it, that he had every prospect of defeating the young laird. And he did defeat him, and has since held the seat against all comers. Previous to my arrival on the spot the Conservative candidate

had referred to me on several occasions, and these references were carefully collected and placed in my hands. I was thus enabled to give a local flavour to my addresses, which but for this would have been entirely lacking, for I had no former acquaintance with the district to fall back upon. But on neither side was language of an abusive or offensive nature used, and when less than twelve months later I met Lord Elcho's father, the Earl of Wemyss, on the Lough Ness golf links, he greeted me with great cordiality and many congratulations on my attempts to learn the royal and ancient game. Next morning he sent a mounted messenger to the cottage where I was staying with an invitation to lunch at Gosford House. Unfortunately I was just on the point of leaving Gullane and was thus compelled to refuse the kindly invitation of one for whom I had conceived a strong personal liking when he sat in the House of Commons as Lord Elcho. Curiously enough, after his defeat in Haddingtonshire Lord Elcho failed for some time to find another seat, but eventually returned to the House of Commons for the borough of Ipswich, which he represented until his voluntary retirement in 1895.

Some years after the Haddingtonshire contest I was playing in the Parliamentary Golf Tournament. My opponent was Mr. Baird, M.P., one of the Glasgow representatives. According to the handicap I had to give him points, and at one time he was five up. By playing for all I was worth I managed

to get even, and at the seventeenth hole I had one to my credit. A considerable number of members who had finished their round doubled back to witness the end of our match, and among them was Lord Elcho. By some mischance I was interrupted in my swing at the last tee-shot, and instead of driving the ball squarely I merely topped it, sending it into a furze-bush, greatly to the delight of the North British section of the audience. In the excitement of the moment my opponent followed my example and lodged his ball in the same bush. Putting forth a strenuous effort, I managed to play into the open, but Mr. Baird, attempting the same stroke, was less fortunate, and left his ball in a rather worse position than before. He was not much comforted by Lord Elcho exclaiming, "Play carefully, Baird, or Broadhurst will beat you as he beat me in East Lothian." It was a true prophecy, for with the next stroke I landed my ball within two yards of the hole and won by two up.

But to return to my electioneering campaign. After leaving Scotland I proceeded to Nottingham to assist Colonel Seely and the other Liberal candidates, and then the time arrived to think of my own political interests. The combined Parliamentary boroughs of Stoke-upon-Trent had been separated into two constituencies by the Redistribution Bill of 1884. For various reasons—the nature of which I cannot well go into at this time—I was led to decide not to contest the Pottery borough again. Looking back upon

that decision I cannot but regard it as one of the greatest political blunders of my life. I believe now that I exaggerated the difficulty, which appeared so great in prospection, consequent upon contesting the seat single-handed, and inducements in another direction helped me into this fresh political error. However that may be, at that time my resignation seemed a wise step, and, having intimated this to the local Liberal Association, I hastily involved myself in pledges to another constituency in order that I might not be over-persuaded to reconsider my decision, as, indeed, I was heartily and universally pressed to do by the leading Liberals of North Staffordshire. Upon the publication of my letter of resignation, within less than a month I received invitations to stand for some ten or twelve different constituencies in various parts of the country. After due consideration I consented to stand as the Liberal Labour candidate for the Bordesley division of Birmingham. My electioneering tours in Scotland and elsewhere had left me no time for canvassing my new constituency, and when I arrived there, worn and weary with much travelling and speechmaking, the polling was only a few days off. My opponent was a well-known and wealthy brewer of the district who owned a large number of licensed houses in the division. He had expended much time and trouble in nursing the constituency, and had also the advantage of the aid of an able and popular wife and family. Possessing ample means, he was from the wirepuller's point of view, an eminently strong

candidate. On the other hand, I found myself in a constituency of which I was totally ignorant, and a complete stranger to the vast majority of the voters.

Before I had been forty-eight hours in the division I devoutly wished I had never seen the place. I was weary and disheartened by my recent campaign, and I found myself quartered in a private lodging-house, with all the discomforts associated with such shelters for the poor in purse. My first meeting was discouraging, and I found my new surroundings well-nigh intolerable. But it was too late to think of retiring from the contest, and there was nothing to do but to face the situation with the best grace possible. Gradually affairs assumed a better complexion; my second meeting was attended with evident success, and from that time the local Liberals supported me most loyally.

It was thought by many of my friends and supporters that the fact of the Conservative candidate being a brewer would rally to my side all sections of the Temperance Party. But even at that time experience had taught me not to place implicit reliance upon such assurances, and my anticipations were subsequently realised. The more cautious of my supporters admitted that my opponent had a big start and that I had much leeway to make up, but they all agreed that by hard work I should yet bear away the palm. The two main points of his political faith were Beer and Fair Trade, and so I was not surprised to hear of the presence in the division of many of my old

antagonists—champions of the countervailing duty on sugar and advocates of the so-called Fair Trade. These men professed to represent the London and other trades, and announced that they bore a mandate from the workers to expose and denounce me. Utterly unfounded allegations of disloyalty to the Labour cause, whose falsity had been exposed and denounced time after time by responsible authorities of the trades-unions, were hashed up again and served to the Bordesley electors as a savoury dish, in the hope that time and opportunity to expose the slanders would fail me. But never was a man more heartily supported by members of trades-unions and working men who took a leading part in political life than I was on that occasion. Baffled by the unanimity on my behalf and out-manœuvred at every point, these dispensers of stale abuse soon found Birmingham too warm for them, and the efforts of my persecutors, so far from injuring my chances, vastly increased them.

After ten days of unceasing effort I felt I had made some headway. Unfortunately, I soon found myself confronted by a more formidable foe than the pseudo working men. In one corner of the division there happened to be a considerable Irish population, and to my dismay the Irish headquarters sent down to Birmingham Mr. T. P. O'Connor, whose ready speech and marvellous energy proved an awkward factor in the contest. Except for the presence of John Bright at one of my meetings, I had to depend entirely on my own efforts and the help of local speakers. On

the other hand, my opponent was greatly aided by speakers from the surrounding divisions, and although a brewer, I was assured that he possessed the tremendous advantage of the support of the Church of England Temperance Society, the Anglican visitors, and the charity distributors. Notwithstanding all these forces on his side, I was enabled to administer to him a handsome beating, gaining the seat by some twelve hundred votes.

During this short but hard contest I found time to visit some of the other divisions of Birmingham and speak in support of the Liberal candidates. I also paid a flying visit to Norwich, where Mr. J. J. Colman and Mr. R. S. Wright (now Mr. Justice Wright of the King's Bench) were standing. We had a magnificent meeting, but Mr. Wright failed to secure the second seat. Owing to various allegations, a petition was brought against the successful Conservative candidate, who was compelled to vacate the seat.

The next night I attended a meeting at Yarmouth in support of Captain Norton. I have had varied experiences of hostile demonstrations in the way of stones and chair-legs, but that meeting will long remain in my memory by reason of the profusion of rotten eggs and bags of flour. Once at a Dis-establishment meeting in Lancashire the speakers—of whom I was one—were pursued by a fierce crowd of male and female defenders of the Church, who were only to be dispersed by the efforts of the local firemen with the engine throwing water on the people at full

pressure. But on this occasion the shower of eggs and flour was absolutely without break. Curiously enough, this malodorous mixture was not aimed indiscriminately at the platform, but only at certain of the speakers who were obnoxious to the audience. Personally I was thankful to find that I had not incurred the ill favour of the wielders of these powerful arguments ; but some of my friends presented a very sorry appearance.

On my return to Birmingham I received an urgent request to proceed to Bury in order to give one night's service to Sir Henry James (now Lord James of Hereford). The great assistance he had rendered to trades-unionism in the early seventies had been well-nigh forgotten by the younger generation, and at this time he was not personally known to the Lancashire workers. Party loyalty as well as trades-union gratitude compelled me to respond to the call ; but in order to get up my case, as the lawyers say, on behalf of Sir Henry, I had to wire and despatch letters in all directions to trades-union officials for reference papers, for my books of reference were all in London and no one there to send them to me. The conditions of the meeting were that it should be confined practically to trades-unionists, and none but trades-union officials were to take part in it, from the Chairman downwards. When I arrived at Bury I found before me a mass meeting of *bonâ fide* working men. By the aid of the Parliamentary Committee's documents I had

no difficulty in proving up to the hilt that Sir Henry James's advocacy of, and devotion to, the cause of Labour from the time of his entry into Parliament had been unbroken and unwavering; and by his position as a distinguished lawyer he had been able to render such services to the working classes as entitled him to their undivided support at the poll. On the following day I returned to Birmingham, and shortly after received several assurances from Bury that the meeting had done much good to the Liberal cause; and more than once Sir Henry James has protested that that gathering of trades-unionists secured his return to Parliament as the representative of Bury.

Only once more did I leave Bordesley before the day of poll, and that was to speak for Mr. Cobb, the Liberal candidate for Rugby division. As a special train was provided for my return journey, I was back in time for a meeting of my own the same night.

The scene in Bordesley on the night of the poll was one of extraordinary excitement. Thousands of people filled the streets and squares in the neighbourhood of the Town Hall and the Liberal Club, while the rain poured pitilessly down through an atmosphere of indescribable mugginess. For me the day was one of incessant movement, driving backwards and forwards from committee-room to polling-booth, and it was nine o'clock at night before I could sit down to my first meal since breakfast. Towards midnight I wended my way, accompanied by Mr.

and Mrs. Schnadhorst, to the Liberal Club, where we awaited the declaration of the poll. So confident of success were the supporters of Mr. Showell that up to a late hour at night large sums of money at long odds were offered backing Mr. Showell's chances of victory. I shall never forget the scene beneath the Liberal Club windows when the figures were announced. It is but rarely in a lifetime that one hears such shouts from a great and excited throng as reached my ears that night. I was dragged from an inner room where I had sought refuge from the tumult and compelled to return thanks to the seething multitude below. These were the days when Birmingham was the Mecca of Liberals. It was the shrine of the advanced guard of Radicalism. Nothing could equal its devotion to great ideals. Liberalism was a religion to Birmingham people. Had one then predicted what has since happened, the reply would have been, like the Israelite of old, "If I forget Thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning."

Domestically I never had a more uncomfortable three weeks than during that contest. Even with the aid of my wife to make the best of our poor surroundings and to give an appearance of comfort and order, it was with the greatest difficulty that I could remain in the place. Mr. Maxwell, my faithful assistant, was ever present, and without him I could not have continued my contest. The one oasis in my desert was the ever-open door of Mr. Schnadhorst's house,

and the kindly hospitality shown by his beloved wife. It was a true place of refuge from the storms and discomfort and the jarring discords of political strife.

Although I had met Dr. Dale on previous occasions I had never really come into close acquaintanceship with him till this time. The first occasion on which I had heard him preach was at the Sunday morning service at Carr Lane Chapel. I had the pleasure of spending the evening of that day at his house, and, strange as it may appear, I never seemed to realise his greatness so much as I did over our mutual pipes and friendly chat. The smallest things he said were inspiring and elevating, and an hour in his company increased one's admiration for his character and his deep and broad sympathy for all around him. The more one knew of him the greater became one's reverence for him. He was gentle and strong, humble and elevated in the highest degree. I can call him to mind at will, and then I hear his words as though still present in the flesh.

Throughout the contest I was ably represented by my agent, Mr. W. Allard, whose accuracy, industry, and coolheadedness contributed largely to the victory ; and I have ever felt grateful to him for, and shall continue to remember, his rare devotion to my cause. This testimony to his worth is now of no value to him, as all these qualities are well known in whatever part of the country, and they are many, he has been called upon to act as election agent, and especially is he

appreciated and valued as the Secretary to the Home Counties Liberal Association in Parliament Street.

No sooner was my own seat secure than the call of duty summoned me to the aid of other candidates almost without a 'moment's respite. After a flying visit to Chester, which Sir Walter Foster was contesting, I proceeded to Crewe, where the Liberal candidate was the late Mr. George Latham. Considerable excitement had been aroused among the employees of the Crewe works by a circular referring to the election issued by the railway authorities. This document had been interpreted as a hint to the men to favour the Conservative candidate, and feeling ran high on the subject in the Liberal camp. I accordingly made it my chief aim to inspire the workers to use their suffrages as became free and independent citizens. I threw my whole soul into the struggle, and scored a strong point by telling of my memorable adventures when I was passing through Portsmouth on a long tramp in the winter of 1858-9, and was taken in and hospitably entertained by the Cheshire Militiamen, as I have already related. I spoke with deep gratitude of the tender way in which these citizen soldiers had nursed and ministered to me in my hour of need. The recital of that story produced a deep impression on that Cheshire audience. Late the same night I was comparing notes with Mr. Latham on the day's work and mentioned the effect which this reminiscence had made upon my meeting. What was my surprise to learn that at the very time I was receiving the

hospitality of the men's mess, Mr. Latham himself was staying in the same barracks as the guest of one of the officers.

A visit to West Staffordshire in support of Mr. Bass's candidature, which next occupied my attention, was memorable for a misadventure of the kind to which political speakers in county divisions are occasionally liable. I accompanied the candidate and his wife to Ednesford, eight or ten miles from Stafford, where we were staying. It was a dark night, with a thick heavy mist, and much of the low lands surrounding Stafford were flooded. During the progress of the meeting the coachman had been informed of a short cut for the return journey. Soon after leaving the village a violent concussion informed us that something had gone wrong. Alighting from the vehicle we discovered ourselves in a narrow lane surrounded by submerged pastures, and on a road the roughness of which threatened to demolish the carriage. The driver was ordered to take us back to the high road, but the lane was too narrow to allow a turning movement, and so we had to push on. Presently another halt was called : the ground had become soft and marshy ; the wheels of the carriage and the legs of the horses sank into it so deeply that we were once more compelled to alight. Our efforts to throw some light on the path in front of the horses were frustrated by the immobility of the carriage lamps, which refused to leave their sockets. Nothing was left but for us to turn out and find assistance. So we set off, guided to some extent by

a wood on our left. Presently we plunged into a pool of water. Happily we pulled up when only knee deep. After a long hail through the mossy bog we were in the last stages of despair, when luckily we espied a light twinkling through a clearing in the wood. One of our number was despatched to this haven of refuge, and, evading a threatening house dog, he obtained enough information to enable us to quit the inhospitable marsh and by traversing a by-road to regain the highway. Altogether our coachman's short cut cost us about two extra hours, besides the discomfort of being wet to the knee.

After another meeting or two in the Midlands, I at length received an intimation that my electioneering tasks were finished, and I was enabled once again to enjoy the peace and comforts of my own hearth, which never appeared more grateful than after these political wanderings.

At this time I was living at Brixton Hill. Since 1880 I had been a member of the Reform Club, having been elected by the Political Committee in recognition of services rendered to the Liberal Party ; this membership I still retain. But mine was far too busy a life to afford much time to avail myself of the comforts of club life, and indeed my inclination turned rather towards physical exercise than lounging in a club smoking-room. I have always been a good walker, both for speed and distance I have held a fair record, and I had made a practice of walking home from the House of Commons except

on rare occasions, when I caught the four o'clock morning train from Victoria Station. In the early eighties late sittings were the rule, and all the last trains and buses had disappeared long before the House would rise. My road was mostly uphill, and generally took an hour for the journey. It may be imagined that such a practice after a hard day's work of sixteen to twenty hours' duration required considerable stamina to maintain. But the sturdiness of my constitution enabled me to keep up the habit regularly until 1888, and even after that time I walked the whole distance at frequent intervals. Those who are ignorant of outdoor life in London in the early hours of the morning would be astonished at the freshness and balmy nature of the air at five o'clock, especially during the summer-time. Between Kennington Gate and Brixton Hill I have many times inhaled with zest the scented air from the fields beyond the rim of Greater London. I seldom carried an umbrella, and for the first six years took no extra precaution against cold except for a light summer overcoat. Only twice was I overtaken by a storm: once it was a snow blizzard and the other occasion was a thunderstorm. Nor did I ever experience any interference from roughs or thieves, even in the darkest and most lonely parts of that long walk. Once or twice I expected an assault and prepared myself to resist, but nothing came of it, and it might have been mere fancy, the result of physical exhaustion, with its inevitable

consequence of nervousness. I have read somewhere that coastguardsmen possess the faculty of sleeping on their beats. I know nothing of that, but I am certain I must have been asleep one morning on my way home ; for as I passed Brixton Church I was startled out of my senses by what appeared to my bewildered ears a discharge of artillery. On investigation it turned out to be the clock striking three. When at home I rarely ever failed to spend at least half the Saturday in long walks in the surrounding country ; and this practice I maintained until my golfing days began. From that time nothing but dire necessity prevented me from spending my Saturdays on the links. I have no doubt this love of outdoor exercise materially assisted in keeping me in a sound state of health for so many years.

But to return to the General Election of 1885. Being much occupied in trades-union work at my office, I used the Reform Club much more frequently than had hitherto been my custom. As may be easily imagined, the club was at this time the centre of great political activity. Mr. Labouchere was busily pursuing his policy of endeavouring to influence the Liberal leaders and rank and file to use the large majority they had gained at the polls in favour of Home Rule in Ireland. I do not propose to enter into the negotiations and intrigues which heralded the first Home Rule Bill. This volume is intended to be merely a series of personal reminiscences and not a political history. I only

refer to the matter to mention a remark I heard one day in the central hall of the Reform Club. The speaker was an ex-Cabinet Minister who subsequently sat on the Front Bench in the two following Liberal ministries. He had been strongly condemning the policy of adopting Home Rule as a Liberal measure, and wound up with the exclamation, "If this policy is persisted in, it will wreck the Liberal Party!" How literally that prophecy has been verified is public knowledge. My own opinions on large questions of policy were, I confess, never sought for by the chiefs of the party; but personally I was in favour of Home Rule, though my judgment would have led to support procedure by resolution rather than by a Bill. However that may be, our leader decided to take the line of Home Rule, and personal opinion gave way to party loyalty, and the great body of Liberal Members manfully supported Mr. Gladstone in his great crusade, which was destined to end so disastrously for him and his cause.

CHAPTER XI

I REACH THE TREASURY BENCH

THE new year came, and when Parliament met the Tory Government was immediately defeated on a motion of want of confidence. The procedure was a mere formality, as they were in a great minority, and ministers sat in their seats calmly awaiting the inevitable division. To my astonishment the change of government brought about a momentous change in my life. One busy day, when I was closely engaged in pressing business in my office, a messenger brought me a letter in Mr. Gladstone's well-known handwriting. Hastily tearing open the envelope, I found the following communication:—

"SECRET.]

21, CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE, S.W.

"February 5th, 1886.

"DEAR MR. BROADHURST,—

"I have very great pleasure in proposing to you that you should accept office as Under-Secretary of State in the Home Department. Alike on private and on public grounds I trust it may be agreeable to you to accept this appointment, which should remain strictly

secret until your name shall have been before Her Majesty.

"I remain, with much regard,

"Sincerely yours,

"W. E. GLADSTONE."

It was not without great hesitation and serious misgivings as to my qualifications for the office that I accepted this flattering proposal. As is the custom, I called immediately upon Mr. Gladstone at his residence in Carlton House Terrace to acquaint him with my decision. He gave me a hearty welcome, and in subsequent conversation he referred to the dark days of Liberalism from 1876 to 1878, and assured me that he had never forgotten my labours and my devotion to the cause of Liberty during those exciting times, when all the worst passions of mankind seemed to pervade the metropolis. He went on to impart to me the fact that he had then determined, when a favourable moment arrived, to recognise my services to the Eastern Question Association in some adequate fashion. Then he inquired what was my answer to his proposal. I at once replied that if it was his wish that I should join the Administration, it should be in some less prominent position than the post he had selected. But on this point Mr. Gladstone would admit no discussion ; he brought the conversation to a close by playfully informing me that he would answer for me himself, and that I must prepare at once to enter upon the duties of the office.

I can honestly declare that I left Mr. Gladstone's

house without any of those feelings of exhilaration and pleasing excitement which the gift of office is generally supposed to awaken in the breast of the politician. Like a drowning man, I lived my life over again in the next half-hour. The lowly beginning of my career, its labours at the forge and the stonemason's shop, the privations, the wanderings, and my varying fortunes, stood out in my mind's eye as clearly as so many living pictures. Especially did my memory recall the months I had spent working on the very Government buildings which I was about to enter as a Minister of the Crown. Then, returning to the present, I realised as I had never done before the irretrievable loss which the lack of education in my early days involved. Visions of humiliation arising from the duties of my new office and my meagre capacity and endowments rose before me with startling vividness. The next twenty-four hours were passed in a tormenting alternation of desire and reluctance : of desire to grapple with and overcome the difficulties of the position by sheer force of will, as I had done on many occasions in the past ; and of reluctance to leave my seat below the gangway, where I had fought for the cause of Labour untrammelled by official limitations and the discipline associated with office. I firmly believe that had not Mr. Gladstone shown such a determined intention to attach me to his Ministry, I should have left him that day with a grateful acknowledgment of his kindness, but an unmistakable refusal to accept his offer.

As soon as the appointment was officially announced in the newspapers, congratulations poured in on me from all parts of the country and from all classes of the community. None of these gave me keener pleasure than a letter from an old stonemason, written in a shaky and almost indecipherable hand. I remember him, when I was a boy, as a pleasant, cheery, well-fed man, surrounded by considerable comfort for one in his position, and the thought of his kind remembrance and congratulations greatly cheered me. Many were the letters I received which bore strong evidence in orthography and phrasing that the writers, like myself, were born before the era of Board Schools. A few days later, in the lobby of the House, I received personal and cordial congratulations on my appointment from the Prince of Wales.

This appointment, of course, obliged me to relinquish the post of Secretary to the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades-Union Congress, and my place was taken by Mr. George Shipton.

Scarcely had the change of Government been effected than the Unemployed agitation in the metropolis began to assume grave proportions, culminating in the serious outbreak known as the Trafalgar Square Riots. ✓ The police arrangements were ineffectual to suppress disorder, and several shops were sacked by the large criminal element in the crowd. As a result the Chief Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police resigned, and Sir Charles Warren received the appointment. These events naturally threw a large amount of work upon

the Home Office, as well as a heavy burden of responsibility, by no means a pleasant initiation for me into official life. But as the days rolled by, I was greatly cheered to find that the experience I had gained in many directions in my old post of Parliamentary Secretary, with its frequent contact with nearly every Government department, stood me now in good stead. The position of an Under-Secretary of State in the House of Commons whose chief is in the same House involves little Parliamentary work, and in the department itself, if one is so minded, the routine duties can be reduced to a minimum. It not infrequently happens that the chief takes upon himself substantially the whole of the public duties of the department, leaving his subordinate with very light work, involving little or no responsibility. But this was not the case with my chief, Mr. Childers. Never did master take more pains in fulfilling the duty imposed upon him by indentures towards his apprentice than Mr. Childers took with me. He not only carefully instructed me in the duties of the office, but gave me many opportunities to act on my own responsibility. A certain class of work was definitely allotted to me, and I was informed that on me would rest the responsibility for its efficient discharge. On several occasions departmental matters, some of them of considerable public importance, were left entirely in my hands to investigate and decide upon. I remember distinctly in one case of an alleged excess of punishment by imprisonment by some county magistrate, I went

carefully into the matter, and decided to reduce the sentence, and the men were immediately liberated. In another case, a Bill which had been for several years in the hands of successive Ministers, and which had reference to police matters of the metropolis, was handed over to me, both for consideration as to what (if any) changes should be made in it and to introduce it in Parliament, and if possible to get it passed into law. It involved a loan of something like a quarter of a million of money, and gave to the London police authorities powers of compulsory purchase of freehold in cases where new police-stations were required or existing ones were held on lease. I prepared an elaborate speech, full of convincing arguments, for the second reading stage; but, unfortunately, when my turn came the hour was so advanced that I saw my only hope was to follow the Yorkshire farmer's advice to his lawyer, "Stow the cackle an' get to th' 'osses"—in other words, to throw my speech overboard and simply move that the Bill be read. Thus, in the small hours of the morning, I passed a Bill containing the principle of leasehold enfranchisement, and so far as I am aware not a single Member recognised the central principle of the measure, which to me, the author of the Leasehold Enfranchisement Bill, was naturally a matter of considerable interest.

Mr. Childers had prepared a Bill to extend the Miners' Regulation Act. For this purpose several consultations were held at the Home Office with the

officials of that department. At these consultations I was always present and took part in the discussions. In many cases Mr. Childers accepted suggestions from me designed to safeguard the interests and lives of the miners, and I was present at the final meeting for determining the scope of the Bill. Domestic affliction prevented my chief from moving the second reading of this measure on the appointed day, and it fell to my lot to discharge that important duty. But Parliamentary vicissitudes ordered otherwise ; the Bill was not reached that night in time to proceed with it. No progress was made with it that session, and when the Tories came into office again later in the summer they found a well-matured Bill to amend the Miners' Act ready to hand.

Many people failed to recognise in Mr. Childers a brilliant statesman ; yet it cannot be denied that he was an exceedingly able administrator and a most conscientious and painstaking Minister. His largeness of heart and kindness of disposition, his patience with the shortcomings and failures of his subordinates, were remarkable. Mrs. Childers, whom I frequently had the privilege of meeting, was a meet companion to her distinguished husband. A woman of keen intelligence and wide experience and endowed with many high qualities, she always exhibited a spirit of encouragement and hopefulness ; to me she was a true and sincere friend.

The flow of congratulations and approving comments on my appointment was not altogether unbroken. I

remember one noble lord courteously suggesting that now Mr. Broadhurst had been made Under-Secretary of State for Home Affairs, it would be an appropriate sequel to appoint Charles Peace, the notorious murderer and burglar, Chief Commissioner of Police. This induced some enterprising newspaper man to investigate the family history of the author of this elegant witticism, with a somewhat inconvenient result for the noble lord. In another case the then Parliamentary representative of the Kennington Division, becoming anxious for the fair fame of the Home Office, addressed a question to the Home Secretary as to whether he had seen a report in newspapers that the present Under-Secretary for Home Affairs had been under the surveillance of the police during the lock-out in the building trades in 1872. The nature of the reply to this vulgar personal attack, supplemented by a word or two of advice from myself, effectually put a stop to any further inquiries from this inquisitive young man ; and shortly afterwards this prop of the Constitution was lost in the oblivion of those for whom their constituents have no longer any use.

Early in the session, as soon as the Irish policy of the Government became known, it was evident to most of us that our tenure of office would be brief. Seeds of disruption were widely scattered, and discontent and restlessness were manifest even in the Cabinet itself.

It is extremely difficult for anyone outside the inner circle of a Ministry to form exact opinions on the causes which produced certain results, but I think I

am not far wrong in claiming that if there had been a little less independence on one side and a greater capacity for conciliating the divergent interests on the other, as well as a more effective Intelligence Department, the disastrous split in the Liberal Party might never have occurred. For some years previous I had been on pretty intimate terms, politically speaking, with the chief figures in our party. I had been favoured with many interviews of a highly confidential nature, and from knowledge which thus came into my possession I was able fairly to understand the attitude of the various component parts of the Cabinet. Even up to the last week before the fatal division on the second reading of the Home Rule Bill I felt there was some chance of securing the neutrality, if not the support, of John Bright. A very short time before the second reading I had the pleasure of dining at the same table with Mr. Bright, I was the only person present who was not a member of his family, and I was greatly impressed by his evident reluctance to tear himself from the most cherished political associates of his lifetime. This belief I took care to communicate to the proper quarter, but perhaps I was mistaken, or perhaps the efforts put forth to realise my hopes were not sufficiently sincere, or were not made at all.

The shadow of the coming disruption was painfully evident for weeks before the event. Strained relations began to make themselves apparent in outward demeanour. Close friends of the past

exhibited a coldness to each other. Nor was this apparent to our own side only. Our opponents, quick to seize their advantage and skilled in political manoeuvring, employed all the arts of social life to capture the waverers. The effect of such influence was found in unexpected quarters. The great London mansions were continuously ablaze with brilliant entertainments designed to attract the rank and file of the party. On the other hand, no adequate measures for counteracting these insidious temptations were taken by the Liberals. With other members I undertook the task of attending to some of the waverers. It was a strange experience, this political wet-nursing, and one not likely to recur in our time. Personally, I never wavered for a moment in what I considered my duty—loyalty to the great leader of the Liberal Party. But the personal animus which was imported into the affair both amazed and pained me, and the inevitable snapping of bonds of friendship and amity gave me much disquietude. After a personal acquaintance with Mr. Chamberlain extending over many years, ripening as years went on into what I believe was a mutual confidence in each other, I felt the wrench of separation more than I can describe. I had a great personal liking for the man. To those with whom he is on good terms, he is most fascinating—no airs or high and mightiness. He stands truly by his friends and never leaves them at the critical moment. In this description I am, of course, speaking of his private

conduct to those in the circle of his supporters ; what he is as an opponent all the world knows. Many of his high qualities commanded my unbounded admiration. In the days when he was the subject of taunts and gibes from the Tories, and when the more timid and Whiggish section of the Liberal Party openly showed their distrust of him, my attachment grew deeper and stronger, so that the separation which perforce ensued at the Liberal Unionist secession affected me in a very special manner.

To the best of my knowledge and belief, in the composition of the Cabinet there were many cross currents at work, and a considerable volume of dissatisfaction. There were influences most strongly mistrustful of Mr. Chamberlain. These influences counted for keeping him from the higher offices in the State ; and however strong a Prime Minister may be, he must at times bend to the winds that blow about him. I believe these influences were wholly aristocratic. These people did not like the Birmingham man, and they intended to show their mistrust of him. If I am correct in my conjecture, and I think I am not entirely wide of the mark, it will be seen that a fertile soil already existed for seeds of disruption should the winds of party strife blow them that way. It is another illustration of the old adage that "adversity makes strange bedfellows." The irony of events brought some of those who did not love Mr. Chamberlain to his feet to lead them in the rebellion against their political kith and kin.

The fatal day at length arrived, and with it the division in the House of Commons, which was the outward and visible sign of the cleavage of the Liberal Party. Those of us who took part in the memorable scene will, I imagine, never forget the poignant sensations it evoked as long as memory lasts. The strength of the two sections had been accurately gauged by the Whips, and those of us who had been most active in canvassing the party and endeavouring to bring back the strayed sheep knew only too well that our doom was sealed, and that the magnificent majority of Liberals returned by the constituencies was about to be scattered like autumn leaves before the gale. The moment was intensely exciting. I have many times thought that the greatest artist of the day could not have found a subject more impressive or dramatic than was presented when Mr. Gladstone walked to the desk where the division clerks were ticking off the names of members as they passed through the lobbies. With a marvellous firmness of step, and his mobile features set in an extraordinary expression of gravity and fixed determination, the statesman whom all England had learned to call the Grand Old Man might have been an early Christian martyr marching to his doom. From a point of vantage I was enabled to see him full in the face as he approached, and to me at least the sight was sublime—the look of fixed, almost agonised resolve of a great leader to sacrifice his proud position at the head of a great and powerful party to satisfy the

claims of justice and to bestow the blessings of peace and prosperity upon a sorely vexed country.

As everyone knows, this fatal division was followed by an appeal to the country, and once again the United Kingdom was thrown into the turmoil of a General Election, which was fought with extraordinary vehemence and bitterness. For reasons with which I need not trouble the reader I had resolved not to stand again for the Bordesley division, and I had to decide on another constituency. Colonel Seely, the Liberal member for West Nottingham, had voted against the Government on the Home Rule Bill, and it was resolved to contest his seat in the Home Rule interest. At the invitation of the local Liberals, strongly backed by the party officials at headquarters, I consented to make an effort to capture the Colonel's seat. So down I went to Nottingham, and in fourteen days I found myself member for the division. All things considered, it was probably the most eventful contest of that General Election.

I have already referred to the visit I paid to Nottingham in the autumn of 1885 to support the three Liberal candidates, who succeeded in carrying the three seats of the borough. Colonel Seely's success on that occasion was not in the least surprising to those who knew the circumstances. He was a large colliery proprietor, an active and liberal-minded man in local affairs, and possessed the advantage of a hard-working and talented family to support his candidature. All things combined to constitute him an ideal

and irresistible candidate, and in 1885 he won the seat by a majority, roundly speaking, of two thousand five hundred. For me, a comparative stranger without local connections or influence, a "carpet-bagger" pure and simple, to attempt to capture this seat within ten months of Colonel Seely's triumphant return seemed the height of madness. But the die was cast; my consent had been given; and before I had time for reflection I found myself in the midst of a hotly contested fight. As at Bordesley I received no outside help for my platform work, and again I found time to assist my colleagues in the other two divisions. The struggle was herculean, and I was almost overwhelmed in the mass of correspondence that reached me from all parts of the kingdom making inquiries as to the record and fitness of various candidates. Added to this was my Home Office work, which demanded my attention for a portion of each day, so that I had but little leisure for rest or time for thought during the two weeks the contest lasted. A good friend lent me his house during the election—a welcome assistance from an economical point of view, but marred by the fact that the establishment was in the hands of painters, the evidence of whose industry was not as music in my ears at six o'clock in the morning, when my previous working day had only ceased at midnight.

But at last the polling day arrived and put an end to all this excitement; and I had the proud

satisfaction of hearing that Colonel Seely's vast majority had been wiped out, and that the seat was mine by a majority of eight hundred or so. I had made arrangements to leave Nottingham that same night, successful or unsuccessful, and when the figures were brought to me at midnight I was just on the point of catching the mail train to London. By 8.30 the next morning I had recorded my vote at the Brixton polling-station, and was again on my way to the ancient city of Chester to help my good friend Sir Walter Foster. On his polling day I took part in some meetings in a county division, and got back to Chester at one o'clock next morning to find my friend's seat captured by the enemy. A journey to Nottingham followed, whence I proceeded after a short delay to Mansfield, where a set of brakes awaited for a tour of the Mansfield division in company with the Liberal candidate, Mr. Foljambe, and a splendid electioneering party. At two in the afternoon we set out for the big mining villages, and as we made our way along I was honoured by the presentation of some half a dozen addresses from the miners of the district. Each address, of course, involved a short speech of acknowledgment over and above the speeches at a similar number of public meetings, all in the open air.

At one of the largest gatherings, where a row of lofty trees at our backs spread out leafy branches like an emerald sounding-board, we encountered the Conservative candidate, and I well remember with what dignity and confidence he marched to the outskirts of

the crowd while I was addressing it. A local politician at my side informed me of his identity, and I lost no time in welcoming him to the meeting and inviting him to a seat in our brake, accompanied by the promise of an opportunity to address the gathering. An avenue was rapidly opened up in the crowd, and by gentle pressure our opponent was induced to accept the invitation. Erect and defiant, he took his stand on the improvised platform ; but his self-satisfaction soon disappeared, for I could not resist the temptation of gently chaffing him on his martial appearance, and of assuring him that the people, despite the respect in which they held him, had determined to secure the return of his Liberal rival. This little incident greatly tickled the crowd and secured us a splendid ovation.

So we journeyed on through the division from meeting to meeting, till at last we reached Mansfield again and found a large concourse waiting to give us a hearty "welcome home." More speechifying was inevitable, and it was nearly midnight before I sat down to the first meal I had an opportunity of taking since an early breakfast in Chester that morning.

To the ordinary methodical citizen, whose habits work with clock-like regularity, these prolonged periods of excitement and hard work without regular meals may appear almost incredible ; but those who have gone through an electioneering campaign know too well how impossible it is to avoid such experiences. But though in the excitement of the moment

one scarcely notices the lack of sustenance, yet in the end Dame Nature exacts a very thorough retribution for the neglect of her claims, as I have found out in latter years.

From Mansfield I proceeded to Nottingham, and after conferring with my chief supporters and agent on matters arising out of my late contest, I left for Derbyshire, where I attended a series of meetings in support of Mr. Jacoby. Next day I addressed several gatherings in the Loughborough division of Leicestershire, and then went north to the Buckrose division to support Mr. W. A. McArthur, now member for St. Austell.

As all the borough elections were now over, and only a few county divisions remained unpolled, I felt that I might rest on my oars, and so returned to London. Here I found the people at headquarters appalled by the terrible extent of the Liberal losses. There was no disguising the fact that the country was in for a period, long or short, of Conservative supremacy. Few Liberals realised how cohesive would prove the elements of Toryism and Dissenting Liberalism which went to make up the Unionist Party. A few, indeed, were clearer-sighted, and amongst them I must number Mr. Chamberlain. I very well remember the last occasion on which the present Colonial Secretary spoke to me before the fatal division on the Home Rule Bill. It was one of the many conversations we held together on the question which way the representatives

of Labour would vote, and particularly as to my own course. With great earnestness Mr. Chamberlain assured me that I was about to take part in a division which would effectually wreck the prospects of the Liberal Party for many a long year. But this emphatic warning in no way shook my resolution to stand by Mr. Gladstone and the Home Rule cause. In the new House of Commons Mr. Burt and myself no longer stood alone as representatives of the working classes ; the General Election added no less than nine Labour members, and all proved themselves sound on the question.

The shock to the party system administered by the ✓defection of men like Chamberlain and John Bright ✓among politicians, and Dr. Dale and Mr. Spurgeon in the ranks of Nonconformity, was terrible. Taking the division of West Nottingham, my own constituency, as a sample, I could hardly believe the evidence of my own eyes when I saw the windows of nearly every public-house decorated with printed appeals from John Bright and Charles Haddon Spurgeon to vote against Mr. Gladstone and his followers. The world seemed to have turned upside down, until we almost began to suspect ourselves bereft of our reason.

I left the Home Department, I must confess, with deep and sincere regret. I do not mean regret for the emoluments or the status which the position carries with it—that did not trouble me ; but after six months' close application to my duties I felt I had

surmounted many of the initial difficulties of the position. Besides, I had formed many pleasant friendships among the permanent officials of the department. It was like being compelled to withdraw from a contest on the eve of assured victory. I had found the work extremely heavy at first (though the amount and character of the work performed by the Under-Secretary largely depend on his own willingness or unwillingness to undertake them), but my duties had daily become more interesting and varied, and I grew to like more and more of them.

One curious experience that befell me during my short term of office was the discovery that I was entitled, in virtue of my position, to half a carcass of a buck from Windsor, or in lieu thereof one or two guineas—I forget the exact equivalent. I chose the half-buck, and in due course it arrived at the Home Office, whence I had to transport it to my home. It proved rather an alarming addition to my small larder; but it enabled me to fill a *rôle* which I have found the most grateful in life—that of the dispenser of favours. I was able to distribute among my friends joints of royal venison.

Official life brings with it many opportunities of social entertainments; but the gaieties of Society, with a big S, never appealed to me. I had no ambition to shine as a diner-out, and few and far between were the occasions on which I dined at private houses. When I first entered the House of Commons in 1880 I was constantly receiving invitations to the usual

functions connected with Parliamentary life, including many dinner parties. But my financial circumstances did not permit of my sharing in these entertainments. In the course of twelve months my unwillingness to accept them became pretty widely known, and I found considerable relief in being comparatively free from the frequent embarrassment of having to explain the reason why I could not "go into Society," as the phrase runs.

When I came into office I was assured on all hands that these reservations would have to be abandoned, and that, to begin with, I should have to be presented at Court, a ceremony involving the purchase of an elaborate and costly uniform, as Under-Secretary of State. The mere idea of having to appear at Buckingham Palace in such a garb was altogether too fearful to contemplate. Not that I would be understood to object to such ceremonies as a matter of principle. Variety and picturesqueness in dress I have always admired, in the case of either man or woman ; indeed, I have an affectionate eye for well-harmonised colours and adornment in clothing. But for me, scarcely emerged from a life of vicissitudes and hardships, to don the gold-laced coat and the velvet breeches, the silk stockings and silver-buckled shoes, the cocked hat and dress-sword, appeared such a travesty, that I could not fail to look supremely ridiculous, if not to the outside world, at least to my own eyes.

At length the crucial moment arrived : Mr. Childers appeared in my room to consult my convenience,

whether I would prefer the first or the second Levée of the season for my presentation. I lacked the courage to say at once that I did not intend to go at all ; but I assured my chief that as the lesser of two evils I should prefer the second Levée, though the third would suit me infinitely better. He would listen to no excuses, and assured me that it was a serious and important part of his Constitutional duties to present me, and that I must be ready to accompany him when the time came. Recognising that further concealment was useless, I made a clean breast of my feelings, and of the horror with which I contemplated the idea of presentation in a Court dress. I did not consider it polite to press the matter any further on this occasion, for I perceived that my statement had considerably shocked the susceptibilities of Mr. Childers. But I set to work immediately to devise some means of obtaining a dispensation from the ceremony.

My first step was to consult one or two friends as to how far I should be justified in refusing to conform to these official usages. One of those whose advice I sought was Mr. Chamberlain, and he strongly encouraged me to persevere in taking relief from attendance at Court. In the course of a few days I communicated to Mr. Childers my fixed resolve to gain a dispensation from attendance at the Levée. He assured me that such a course was impossible, and begged me to save time and further anxiety by giving the necessary orders to a Court tailor.

But I was not to be deterred from my purpose, and after consulting other influential people, I composed a letter setting forth my position, and pleading that I had on one or two occasions received from T.R.H. the Prince and Princess of Wales indulgence to absent myself from functions involving similar difficulties to that which I was now endeavouring to overcome. I further pointed out that the Speakers of the House of Commons had absolved me from attendance at his dinners and levées, adding that under these circumstances I felt sure I should not appeal in vain for Her Majesty's consent to dispense with my presence at the Levée. I have reason to believe that this appeal ultimately came under the personal notice of the Queen, and that Her Majesty was graciously pleased to grant me the dispensation I sought. Thus when I laid down the responsibilities of office I left the Ministerial Bench with the distinction of being the only occupant of such a position who had not been presented at Court or taken part in any of the formal functions, such as the banquet given by the Home Secretary on the anniversary of the Queen's Birthday, the Speaker's receptions, and the like. Up to the present moment I have continued to sit in Parliament, to win elections, and generally discharge my duties to my fellow-men without the aid of either Court dress or evening dress.

It is not to be supposed, however, that my objection to donning these garments arises from any deep and noble principle as a representative of Labour. On the

contrary, some of my colleagues in Parliament, as well as several prominent Labour leaders outside the House, observe this usage of Society, and, I must confess, their appearance when thus arrayed is no way inferior to that of their wealthier fellows. I do not think that any Labour member has ever donned a Windsor uniform ; and if my supposition be correct, it naturally follows that none have been able to pay their respects to Mr. Speaker at any of his receptions when Court dress is obligatory. After the General Election of 1886 a departure was made in the order of the Speaker's entertainments. The self-exclusion of eleven members (the number of the Labour representatives in the new Parliament) was felt by Mr. Peel to be highly undesirable. So the accomplished and tactful wife of the Speaker thoughtfully gave us occasional invitations to afternoon tea ; and this concession was subsequently improved upon by the Speaker's giving a morning-dress dinner. I believe this occurred on the Derby Day of 1886, and some thirty members, as well as some distinguished men not members of the House, assembled. The whole of the Labour members were invited, and almost all attended what proved to be an extremely enjoyable evening. I remember having for my right-hand neighbour the late Lord Justice Bowen, who, as everybody knows, was a most accomplished and intellectual man. After discussing many subjects, we turned to the topic of long sentences.

Now it happened that I had acquired some know-

ledge on this subject, for during the year 1880, on the invitation of the Home Secretary, Sir William Harcourt, Mr. Burt and I had accepted the honorary appointment of Visitors to the Penal Settlements. Our visits were paid at any time we chose, and no notice was given of our coming. If we so desired we were permitted to hold private and uninterrupted interviews with the convicts, so that any complaints might be made freely without fear of subsequent punishment. After twelve months' experience of this work I suffered so much physical and mental distress after each visit that I could no longer continue to act as Visitor. I sent in my resignation, and other Labour representatives were subsequently appointed to the post. The experience gained in these visits led me to the conclusion that long sentences were not effective for the purposes of reformation. Accordingly, I took the opportunity of expressing these opinions to Lord Bowen, and discussed with him the possibility of ascertaining by scientific investigation at which period the repressive effect of imprisonment ceased and the hardening process began. He was keenly interested in the subject, and made many inquiries concerning the details of life in these establishments. I was astounded to find that a judge who had condemned men to long periods of penal servitude, and in all probability would do so again, had never seen the inside of a convict prison, and was largely unacquainted with the mode of life in these establishments. In the end he gave me a promise that he

would take the earliest opportunity to inspect one of Her Majesty's prisons.

This dinner, so far as I am aware, was the first and the last of its kind given by Speaker Peel, and I have not heard of the present Speaker making any experiment of a like nature. There may have been good reasons why this innovation never crystallised into a custom ; but I cannot help thinking it unfortunate that so excellent a method of bringing Labour representatives into contact with men distinguished in the spheres of literature, law, art, and science has been suffered to drop out of Parliamentary life.

There was one fashionable function which I attended for years in succession. This was the Garden Party at Marlborough House. As a spectacle it is always worth seeing, for in addition to all the leaders of the political, literary, artistic, and ecclesiastical worlds in this country, many foreign notabilities attend. The chief event, so far as I was able to observe, was the entrance of Her Majesty to the garden from Marlborough House and her progress to the Royal tent, into which none but the privileged few, and they only by invitation, were suffered to penetrate. On one occasion when I was present the Shah of Persia and his little son were the centre of attraction ; at other times it was the Emperor and Empress of Germany, the King and Queen of Denmark, and the Czar of Russia with members of his family. The brilliance of the dresses, the beauty of the garden, and the pleasing

strains of the band, made this function a most acceptable diversion in the commonplace round of a workaday world. I was always accompanied at these functions by my niece, for my wife resolutely and steadfastly refused to take part in the frivolities of fashionable people.

CHAPTER XII

IN TROUBLED WATERS

AS I was now out of office and a free man, the Operative Stonemasons' Society elected me to represent them at the Trades-Union Congress in September, 1886, and by an almost unanimous vote I was re-elected Secretary of the Parliamentary Committee. The resumption of my old work brought me back at once to my former habits of life and spheres of operation. From this period till the close of my connection with the Parliamentary Committee in 1890, when protracted ill-health compelled me to resign my office, I was intimately associated with all the Labour questions which arose in the House of Commons.

The most prominent of these at that time was the Amendment of the Employers' Liability Act of 1880. Mr. Matthews, the Home Secretary, had introduced a Bill on the subject which in no way met the demands of the Congress. During the debate on the second reading the shortcomings of the measure were pointed out to the introducer by deputations, interviews, and other means. But the Government persisted in attempting to force it through the House by sheer weight of numbers.

The Bill was eventually referred to the Grand Committee on Trade, and at the desire of the Parliamentary Committee of the Congress I exerted every effort to induce the Government to amend the objectionable clauses. But I was baffled at every point by a stubborn refusal to make any of the desired changes ; so when the Bill was reported to the House in the autumn session, I moved its rejection. A debate followed, lasting the whole of the night, and the report stage was passed by a majority of fifty.

The main incident of the discussion was a violent attack upon me by Mr. Bradlaugh, who supported the Government. Furthermore, one of the leaders of the Liberal Party severely reprimanded me for venturing to move the rejection of the Bill, on the ground that the debate could only prove abortive and that the Bill was certain to be carried by an overwhelming majority. But the Government majority proved to be anything but overwhelming, and the impression made by the attack on their measure was so great that they withdrew the Bill, and I had the satisfaction of having wrecked the worst drawn-up and most contentious measure ever introduced into Parliament on that question. Moreover, the Government made no second attempt in their remaining four years of office to reintroduce the Bill.

During this time I was under the great disadvantage of being in ill-health, and my medical adviser, Sir Walter Foster, had ordered me to leave London and take a prolonged rest ; but I could not tear myself away

from the scene of action until the end of the fight and the rout of the enemy. Had this measure become law, the Bill of 1893-4 could not have been introduced. Although the latter did not reach the Statute Book, yet its chief features created such an impression upon the House that when in 1897 the Conservatives introduced another Bill dealing with the subject, they were careful rather to follow the more liberal line of the 1894 Bill, and not to frame it upon the lines of their abortive Bill of 1888.

In the same year (1888) I was successful in preventing the passing of a Seamen's Pension Bill, which would, in the opinion of most seamen, have injuriously affected their freedom and well-being. It would have bound them hand and foot to the service, and created a servitude of a hateful nature, with insufficient security for alternative benefits.

Two years later I was again interested in shipping matters, this time introducing a Bill with the object of fixing a definite position for the load-line on merchant ships. In the preceding Act (1876) the position was left uncertain, and so far as the law was concerned the load-line might be fixed on the funnel without transgressing the statute. Being unable myself to remain in the House during the later hours of the night, I obtained the assistance of Mr. George Howell to look after the measure in my absence. By dint of amicable consultations with shipowners and the President of the Board of Trade, we were enabled to make such terms as allowed the Bill to

be passed that session. Lord Herschell steered it through the House of Lords, and I had the satisfaction of seeing it become law, and of knowing that I had rendered a useful service to that most deserving but sadly neglected class, the merchant seamen of Great Britain.

This was not the first occasion on which Lord Herschell had rendered me valuable service. In the preceding session of Parliament I had introduced a Bill to amend the law of Distraints, and by the aid of Lord Herschell, who piloted it through the Lords, I succeeded in getting the Bill through both Houses. This Act provided that a workman's implements to the value of £5 should be free from distraint for rent ; another clause prevented a landlord who had seized a tenant's goods in lieu of rent from selling them within fifteen days from the date of seizure, instead of five days as in the old statute. This afforded the tenant a better chance of obtaining assistance to save his home being broken up. Other clauses provided for the registration of bailiffs, with the object of preventing acts of illegality so often perpetrated against the defenceless poor. Those who have lived among the poor and seen the grievous wrongs inflicted by the old system of distraint for rent will readily understand the value of this latter clause. The harshness of the old law and the brutality with which it was often carried out were brought home to me by the facts accumulated by Judge Chalmers, of the Birmingham County Court. Any measure calculated to enlarge the power

of County Court judges and to raise their status, and thus attract to this field a higher class of barristers, always had my deepest sympathy. The County Court is essentially the tribunal of the poor and friendless; and in order that those least able to help themselves should have the best chance of securing every protection that the law affords, it is of the first importance that men of high capacity and alertness of perception should be induced to accept County Court judgeships.

When the Trades-Union Congress assembled in Dundee towards the end of 1889, there was little substantial progress to report, for the session had been a barren one. The only striking feature in my report referred to the consent provisionally given by the Government to send representatives to the Labour Convention proposed by the German Government; with this topic I have dealt elsewhere. But however barren my report was, it cannot be said that the proceedings of the Congress lacked vivacity and excitement. In order that my readers may fully understand the position of affairs at that time, I must retrace my steps and recall the course of events in the political world immediately succeeding the General Election of 1886. After their crushing defeat at the polls the Liberal Party, guided by that greatest of organisers, Mr. Schnadhorst, set energetically to work to regain the ground they had lost in the country. The result was the establishment of the finest organisation in the history of the party.

During the six years of power enjoyed by the Tory

Party an unprecedented number of bye-elections occurred, and in nearly every one I took some part. In certain of these contests I was the principal speaker on the Liberal side, and as a rule I addressed the first meeting of the contest and the final meeting on the eve of the poll, and not infrequently remained in the constituency until the result was declared, when it was considered that my presence on the polling day would assist the candidate. This line of action infuriated that section of Labour leaders who have since adopted the title of the Independent Labour Party, and at each succeeding Congress I had to face a bitter attack from them. Every effort was exhausted to discredit me in the eyes of the working classes. My simplest words and actions were misconstrued and placed in a false light. Their one aim was to prove that I had been a traitor to the cause which I represented. My enemies had vastly improved upon the crude methods adopted by the champions of the Countervailing Sugar Duties. Fertility of resource and an extraordinary versatility marked every stage of this campaign against me.

These qualities, allied to an utter disregard for the real truth, formed a power which might well have overwhelmed and crushed a stronger man than I. A newspaper called *The Labour Elector* was especially conspicuous for its undisguised and venomous attacks. Paragraphs criticising my action appeared in nearly every column, and the homes of trades-union officials and other workmen interested in political and Labour affairs were flooded with copies of this journal.

As a result I received hundreds of letters, written in good faith by men by no means hostile to me, inquiring if I had seen certain paragraphs enclosed reflecting upon my public life, and whether, if the accusations were untrue, I intended to write a reply to these charges in the next issue of the paper. The reader can easily imagine that the multiplication of such communications entailed a tremendous amount of labour in replies, without taking into account their effect upon one's mind.

Of the straightforward frontal attacks in which Mr. Keir Hardie and Mr. Tom Mann indulged I have no complaint to make. As each Congress came round, Mr. Hardie assailed me on questions which were before the Congress and gave him a perfect right to criticise my actions; and although his attacks sometimes exceeded the limits prescribed by strict fairness, they were at any rate face to face and left no rancour in our hearts. Besides, they afforded the other delegates a pleasurable change from the rigorous monotony of business procedure. Mr. Mann was not at that time a delegate to the Congress, but I have met him since and always on terms of friendliness, if not friendship. Both in him and in Mr. Keir Hardie I have ever recognised men of exceptional abilities and earnestness of purpose; I have always admired their devotion to the principles they have espoused.

But I cannot say the same of others who pursued me with a malevolence and subtlety not easy

to baffle. Not satisfied with the articles and paragraphs in *The Labour Elector*, they scattered leaflets and pamphlets broadcast through the country, and in one case I received information that a hundred thousand copies of an address purporting to emanate from the workmen of London, and savagely assailing me, had been despatched to selected workmen in the provinces. Occasionally some of my colleagues came in for a share of this abuse, though generally in a milder form than that with which I was favoured. We were stigmatised as a gang of place-hunters scheming to obtain Factory Inspectorships and other appointments under Government.

At the Dundee Congress the hostility came to a head; every accusation printed in these pamphlets and leading articles was hurled at me by men who were merely repeating, parrot-like, the words put into their mouths by my bitter enemies, few of whom were entitled to be present as delegates, though some of them occupied seats in the gallery as spectators of the fray. The grand assault began early on the second day of the Congress, Mr. Keir Hardie and a representative of the London Society of Compositors being the protagonists. The gist of the charges formulated against me by these speakers was that I had supported the candidature of two employers of labour, in spite of the fact, as it was alleged, that these gentlemen conducted their businesses in a manner inimical to the interests of Labour.

How false and malicious these allegations were I

had little difficulty in proving. In 1887 I had assisted Mr. Brunner in his candidature. Soon after the election he revised some of the conditions of labour in connection with his vast works, and among the alterations was the establishment of an eight hours' shift, with certain financial adjustments which would ultimately work out at about the same wages for the shorter hours as for the longer ones. A great mass meeting of the workers was held to consider this proposal, and one of the Directors was invited to accept the post of chairman. I was asked by the workmen to be there to speak, and I strongly recommended them to accept the eight hours' shift, on the ground that they and their families would be permanent gainers by the physical economy consequent on the shorter working hours and the moral advantages that would follow the increase of their leisure. These suggestions were adopted, and I have reason to believe they proved beneficial not only to the workers and all dependent upon them, but in a great measure to the substantial and lasting advantage of the firm itself. A system of annual holidays without deduction of wages, subject, of course, to certain regulations, educational provision for the children, compensation for accidents to the workers, whether the firm was legally responsible or not, and other mutual arrangements were established, which altogether have placed the firm of Brunner, Mond, & Co. in the front rank of model employers in this kingdom. It will thus be seen

that I have no cause to regret my association now with Sir John Brunner in the political arena. As a politician and as a social reformer, scarcely a vote he has given or a speech he has made in the House of Commons during his membership can be successfully criticised from the workers' point of view. Giving my own opinion of him, both as an employer and as a popular representative in Parliament, I can only say that if all were like him, our country would be happier, more prosperous, and freer than it is to-day.

Until four o'clock in the afternoon of that day I sat quiet, while the enemy pounded my position with all the artillery of argument, abuse, and calumny they could bring to bear. Then came my turn: a letter containing a practical vote of confidence in me which had reached me that morning from the Chairman of the London Society of Compositors enabled me to take my less formidable opponent on the flank, greatly to his discomfiture. I occupied some fifty minutes in my speech of vindication; and when a resolution of confidence was put to the Congress, my opponents secured only eleven votes, while my supporters numbered one hundred and seventy-seven.

The scene that ensued baffles description. The Gilfillan Hall, where the Congress met, was crowded with spectators and delegates, and when the votes were read out the greater part of the audience sprang to their feet and cheered wildly. Hats were thrown into the air, men sprang upon chairs and tables to vent their feelings of satisfaction more easily, and in some cases



MR. BROADHURST ADDRESSING THE HOUSE.

From *The Westminster Gazette*.]

[By kind permission of Mr. F. C. Gould.

strong men were utterly unable to control their emotion. I am far from narrating these facts as merely significant of my popularity. The satisfaction manifested at the utter rout of my traducers went much farther than that. My supporters recognised

that my triumph meant the vindication of the solidarity of the organised trades against the continuous and savage onslaughts directed against trades-unionism and its leaders by a mixed band of free lances.

I need hardly say that this ordeal left me completely exhausted, and I was glad to be rescued from my enthusiastic supporters, who crowded on to the platform to congratulate me. A few hours of entire seclusion and an afternoon spent on the Carnoustie golf-links sufficed to put me on my feet again. I was enabled to carry out my duties for the rest of the Congress, as well as to fulfil several engagements at public meetings.

I had previously accepted an invitation to visit Sir Leonard Lyell, Bart., at his place in Forfarshire, which, by the way, lies close to Kirriemuir, the "Thrums" of Mr. Barrie's books. Sir John Leng happened to be going on a visit to the same house, and kindly took my niece and myself by road. The drive from Dundee to Kirriemuir, through the Vale of Ogilvie, about twenty miles in all, was a welcome refreshment after the long hours spent in the heated Congress Hall. Sir John had instructions to take us to lunch at Glammis Castle, which lies midway between Dundee and Kirriemuir, and where we received a hearty welcome from the Earl of Strathmore. I was delighted to have an opportunity of inspecting this ancient pile, indissolubly associated with the name of Macbeth. I was duly shown all its wonders, and they are many, and especially the

haunted chambers, which called to mind the many legends associated with that historic place.

Few of the ancestral halls of Great Britain can boast so many ghostly associations as Glammis Castle. Here Duncan was foully slain by Macbeth, and many another deed of blood is associated with its history. Spectral carpenters hammer and plane invisible planks ; ghastly faces peer into windows ; and at times the courtyard rings with midnight shrieks, and a ghostly man in armour patrols the lonely corridors at dead of night. Beyond these weird occurrences there is a terrible family secret connected with a hidden chamber in the massive stone walls, and known only to three living persons—the Earl of Strathmore, the heir-apparent, and a third person. The place fascinated me vastly, and it was with uncommon regret I took my leave of a castle of so many imaginations.

This was not my first visit to the Lyells and their pleasant and interesting old house, situated in the midst of a well-wooded estate within easy distance of the Grampians, and so secluded that to me, long accustomed to the busy haunts of industrial man, its silence seemed almost awe-inspiring. On a former occasion, when spending a few days there, I had redeemed a promise, made some years before, to visit Airlie Castle, which stands half a dozen miles from Kinnordy in an even more remote and lonely situation. The Dowager Lady Airlie was at home, and I spent a very enjoyable and instructive half day in the midst of the treasures of that celebrated mansion. Its

historical associations are so well known that I will not weary my readers with an account of them in this place. But the impression left upon my mind by visits to these "lordly pleasure-houses" is that they form invaluable retreats for the exhausted and weary brain, if one's temperament will permit one to rest contented in a solitude where the voice of man is silent, and the only sounds are the calls and cries of beast and bird and insect.

For some time I had seriously meditated resignation of the secretaryship of the Parliamentary Committee. This act I postponed in order to meet the promised attacks to be made at the Dundee Congress: it was not due to the brow-beating to which I was for years the victim, but to a far more serious reason. In the latter part of 1888 I was seized by a form of disease from which no patient ever obtains full release. It was an acute phase of this illness that I was suffering from when attacked by Mr. Bradlaugh in the House of Commons at the end of the session of 1888. A prolonged rest the following winter somewhat restored me, but later I had several relapses, and at times my suffering was severe. In 1890 my eyes became affected, and I was obliged to have recourse to Mr. Nettleship for treatment. At one stage many of my friends believed that I should not permanently recover—an apprehension which I myself shared. At last matters came to a head; I saw clearly that I must definitely choose between the resignation of the secretaryship of the

Parliamentary Committee and a complete breakdown. After careful consideration I took the former course and asked to be relieved of my responsibilities.

During the winter of 1890-1 I was so seriously ill that I was compelled to relinquish my purpose of moving a resolution in favour of a Fair Wages agreement being inserted in all Government contracts. The object of this resolution, which was drawn up at the suggestion of the London Building Trades Council, was to put an end to the vicious system of subcontracting of Government work, and to make it possible for the higher class firms to gain the contracts. The motion was eventually accepted without a division, though in a considerably modified form. At my suggestion the charge of the resolution was handed over to Mr. Sydney Buxton, who discharged the task with credit to himself and advantage to the cause of Labour. As the constant dripping of water wears away granite stone, so ceaseless attacks of a band of men acting in concert, aided by a subsidised paper, may undermine the strongest constitution, especially in the case of sensitive natures.

At this time the disease from which I was suffering assumed an intermittent form, and for four years I was subject to severe attacks at intervals. But relief from my secretarial responsibilities and, again, a long rest in the early part of 1891 worked a beneficial change, and in the spring of that year I was able to resume to some extent my political work both in Parliament and in the country. My first action was in relation to the

free? lamentable state of the poor in our great industrial centres. I introduced a motion calling attention to the frightful state of overcrowding in the large towns, and advocating the adoption of the Glasgow system of cheap municipal lodging-houses. I also invited consideration of a project for giving the poorest class of children attending the elementary schools one good meal a day. These proposals were looked upon with suspicion, and I was regarded as a visionary Socialist. However, I have since had the satisfaction of seeing some at least of my suggestions carried to success.

The only work of a strictly political character I attempted in the House that session was a notice of motion in favour of all polling at a General Election taking place on one and the same day. I was unfortunate in the ballot, and did not obtain a place for my motion. But in the Registration Bill introduced by Mr. John Morley in 1892 a provision to the same effect found a place; and at the time it was erroneously stated that this was the first occasion on which the matter had been before the House.

Outside the House I was almost continuously working in the constituencies until the close of the General Election of 1892. For instance, I spent nearly a fortnight of August, 1891, assisting Sir Donald Macfarlane in his candidature for Argyllshire—an extraordinarily difficult constituency. There were some hundreds of miles of coast line to be visited, and the only effective means of reaching the scattered fishing-hamlets was by water. Sir Donald is an enthusiastic yachtsman,

and had at his disposal a handsome craft of five hundred tons called the *Hiawatha*. She possessed splendid sea-going qualities, and was well equipped in every way. By her aid we touched at nearly every waterside village between Campbelltown and Inverary, and many varied experiences fell to our lot.

I well remember the close of our tour. Being driven into the Holy Loch by stress of weather, we held two successful evening meetings in the neighbourhood of Dunoon. Returning from one of these gatherings we had some difficulty in finding the landing-stage, at which a boat was in waiting to take us aboard the yacht, for a strong westerly breeze drove the heavy rain in our faces, making the blackness of night almost impenetrable. At length we gained the object of our search, but to my horror I found that, as it was low water, in order to reach the boat I must descend a steep flight of steps, wet and slimy, and totally innocent of any handrail to assist the descent of the nervous landsman. The prospect of a slip in the dark and a plunge into the black waters amongst the timber of the staging completely unmanned me; and had there been any possibility of obtaining quarters for the night near at hand, no power on earth would have induced me to go on board the *Hiawatha*. But at last my fears were abated, and with the assistance of two sturdy mariners the perilous descent was safely negotiated.

After a fortnight's cruising I began to pine for more space to move about in than the limits of a cabin and deck parade allowed, and I was not sorry when the

end of this marine campaign was reached. I spent my evenings on board alternately in the saloon and the forecastle, where I struck up a great friendship with the crew, who were all intelligent men, fond of a good smoke and a long yarn ; and I am quite certain that the feeling of regret at my departure from their midst was mutual.

My old chief, Mr. Childers, who was member for South Edinburgh, had been obliged to go abroad by a severe attack of rheumatism, and as he was under promise to address his constituency, he asked me to undertake this duty in his stead. This I readily consented to do, and in consequence spent some pleasant days in and about Edinburgh and on the golf-links at Dunbar. Having fulfilled this commission, I made my way north to Inverness-shire to attend the annual meeting of the Highland Land Reform Association at Dingwall.

One memorable day I spent in the Black Isle visiting croft after croft, seeing with my own eyes and hearing from the crofters' lips the kind of life they led, its hardships and its advantages. It was a splendid autumn day, and I greatly enjoyed my experience. At one of the crofts I was hospitably entertained in the traditional Highland manner by the housewife, whose "gude man" was from home, and plied with unlimited meal bread and butter, with capital milk to wash it down. The roof of the croft sheltered cows, pigs, and poultry, as well as human beings, though not all in the same apartment.

Small as the building was, it contained a parlour, in which I was entertained.

Bit by bit I extracted the life story of my hostess as I enjoyed my repast ; while through the open door appeared the shock head of an urchin of six or seven years, extracting unlimited amusement from my southern accent, and trying to induce a fine collie dog to mimic my strange speech. Straitened as were the resources of the household, they had yet, by dint of self-sacrificing frugality, succeeded in saving enough money to give the eldest son a university education at Edinburgh. Unfortunately, the lad's tastes did not run in the direction of theology, and forsaking his studies, he had enlisted. At the time when I visited his parents' croft, this young Scotsman, by his own exertions and bravery, had won rapid promotion from the ranks, and was serving as a commissioned officer in the Egyptian Army. Very proudly did his toil-worn mother draw from its tin case and display to me the parchment containing his commission.

Another incident which stands out in my memory concerning that day was my meeting with a stone-breaker on the high road. He was an elderly man, of aristocratic mien, and displaying in every word and movement that natural refinement that seems to be a perquisite of the rugged sons of the North. I found he possessed a wonderful knowledge of public affairs, and we had a long and interesting conversation on current politics. My guide on this journey, Mr. McLeod, of Inverness, still occasionally informs me

that the old stone-breaker inquires after me; and through the agency of Mr. McLeod I have on several occasions forwarded to him Parliamentary papers affecting questions in which he took an interest.

The demonstration of the Highland Land Reformers which I attended at Dingwall on the following day was of a character not easily to be forgotten. People had gathered from all parts of the Highlands as well as the Shetlands to take part in the proceedings. To commence with, I was treated to a serenade of bag-pipes at an early hour in the morning under the windows of my rooms. When the hour of meeting approached, I had to head a procession, followed immediately by the pipers skirling away with all the abandon of true "cocks of the North." Thus we promenaded the chief thoroughfares of the town of Dingwall, finally arriving at the platform, which had been erected in a field where Mr. Gladstone had spent many happy hours in his childhood while visiting a relative.

During this visit I received many invitations to extend my tour to the more northern towns, and none was more hearty than that from the people of Skye. To make the offer more tempting, they promised me my choice of the best dog in the island if I would go and choose it for myself. I have always been an enthusiastic lover of dogs, and collie dogs in particular have an intense fascination for me. I do not mean the breed so fashionable at dog-shows in the present day, with narrow jaws, tapering foreheads, and

eyes within an inch of each other. To obtain these results the brain accommodation is so compressed that the animal becomes of little service, fit only for ornamental purposes. Give me the animal in his natural state, with big, broad, open countenance, wide forehead, and space enough between the eyes to accommodate a brain full of intelligence, receptivity, and memory, the whole dominated and completed by a warm and loyal heart excelling almost all hearts in affection and friendship.

After my return from Dingwall I spent the remainder of the time that elapsed before the General Election in various parts of England. It was during this period that I spoke for the last time on behalf of my dear and valued friend Mr. Arthur Winterbotham. My friendship with him dated from the early "Eighties," when I met him on the platform of a great Liberal gathering at Hereford. Our acquaintance quickly ripened into friendship, and notwithstanding the divergence of our views on the Home Rule question, upon which Mr. Winterbotham sided with the Liberal Unionists, our friendship remained firm through that stormy period, when many ties were rudely broken and old comrades parted in anger. But I always felt confident that he would return to the Liberal fold, and my expectation did not long remain unfulfilled. Naturally, the fact of his return to the Liberal camp had to be announced to his constituents, and naturally also the selection of the time and place for this reversion to renewed faith in his old leader cost him

much anxiety. His constituency was the Cirencester division of Gloucestershire, and Stow-in-the-Wold was eventually selected as the place of assembly. To his request that I should accompany him I readily agreed, and an intensely interesting occasion it proved to be.

Stow-in-the-Wold is a quaint old country town, built mainly of limestone, with picturesque roofs of thick stone slating, and remote from the great trunk lines. The meeting was held in the Town Hall, an antiquated building dating back several hundred years, and reached by a very old but firm staircase. The interior of the hall was entirely in keeping with the outward aspect, and bore many a trace of mediæval workmanship. The place was packed to its utmost capacity. The refinements of town audiences were quite unknown to these honest and simple folk ; unhidden shirt-sleeves formed the evening dress of the majority. But the absence of fashionable garments was amply compensated for by the wild enthusiasm manifested throughout Mr. Winterbotham's address, as he sought to justify the course he had taken. When he sat down, I was called upon to extend to the returned wanderer a hearty welcome in the name of Liberalism. A big fellow in the audience had made himself conspicuous by his hearty demonstrations of delight at the proceedings, interjecting exclamations of approval in the dialect of the country-side, which had been familiar to me from my boyhood. I had never visited the town before, and every person in the hall,

except Mr. Winterbotham, was a total stranger. However, I could not resist the temptation to congratulate this Gloucester giant on his enthusiasm for the cause, saying that he, at least, had killed the fatted calf in celebration of the prodigal's return. Much to my surprise, this personal reference was received with an uncontrollable outbursts of delight; I had evidently made a happy hit in the dark. The mystery was solved by the chairman whispering in my ear that my friend in the audience was the local butcher.

Never shall I forget the happy hours spent in the peaceful atmosphere of Mr. Winterbotham's home. The jovial freedom of his manner and the heartiness of his welcome reflected truly his attitude towards the other members of his establishment; every inmate, down to the horses and dogs, loved the master of the house. I particularly remember an enjoyable day spent on the Minchinhampton Common golf-links under the guidance of one of his sons, a fine young athlete and an accomplished golfer. By Mr. Winterbotham's desire the local professional lent me his clubs for this occasion, and I developed quite a passion for the cleek, which seemed to me the handiest club I had ever gripped. With its aid I made a very fine tee shot across the mouth of a gaping quarry, landing close to the hole. At the end of the round my young friend would not hear of my relinquishing the club with which I had made this fortunate shot, and then and there paid the professional a handsome price for it, and it became my property.

Mr. Winterbotham did not at all like my prospects of re-election at West Nottingham, and coupled with this he was most anxious to win the seat at Stroud from the Tory Party. He felt absolutely confident that if I would contest it I should win by a good majority. He pressed this view most strongly upon the central Liberal authority in London, and went so far as to offer to pay the whole of my expenses if I was allowed to stand for Stroud ; but this was refused. Mr. Winterbotham took a special interest in the representation of Stroud, it being near to his home. Such was his extravagant kindness to me that he always said I could in a fair fight win any place for which I put up.

At the last meeting which I attended in the company of Mr. Winterbotham I experienced that strange sensation of foreboding which the Scotch call "being fey." I had finished a series of political engagements in the southern counties, and on my way to Yorkshire I passed through Wiltshire and Gloucestershire. The meeting was at a small town some distance from Cheltenham. Mr. Winterbotham, his cousin, and I journeyed together to the meeting, which proved a most successful one. But try as I would I could not succeed in throwing off this feeling of depression, and I fear that my speech assumed a somewhat maudlin character, as I dwelt upon the noble qualities of my old friend. Even on the return journey my usual buoyancy refused to come to my aid, and silence, unusual in that company, reigned supreme.

Next morning Mr. Winterbotham saw me off, and in a few months' time I heard that death had robbed me of one of the best and most loyal of friends. One of his last requests was that I should succeed him as Liberal member for Cirencester. As I had just lost my seat at West Nottingham, I would gladly have acceded to his desire and contested the division. But Fate willed otherwise; the fracture of a muscle in one of my legs compelled me for a season to forsake politics and lie by with my wounded limb in splints.

But I have not yet told my readers how it came to pass that I was in want of a seat. For some time I had felt very doubtful concerning my chances of remaining the representative of Nottingham, and had felt strongly tempted to accept several offers to stand as candidate elsewhere. For example, in 1892 I was informed that I should be an acceptable candidate for the city of Norwich. Every influence that could be exercised was brought into play to induce the Liberal managers to allow me to stand for the old city, where it was thought, for various reasons, I had a better prospect of winning than any other available Liberal candidate, always excepting Mr. Colman. Sore and deep was the disappointment among those chiefly responsible for the Liberal interests in that city when it finally became known that I was not to be permitted to accept their offer. It was declared again and again by those entitled to speak that had I been the second candidate in conjunction with Mr. Colman, both of

us would certainly have been returned. I felt myself that my old associations with the city and the constant connection I had maintained with the political and other affairs of the county would have been a material help towards success, but it was not to be. Personally, I much regretted it, and nothing would have given me greater pleasure than to have represented Norwich in Parliament.

It is a city rich in historic associations and remarkable for its industrial past. At one time it was almost the chief home of the silk trade in England, and its shawls were world-renowned for their texture, design, and beauty of finish. During the long years of my association with the Trades Congress I have of necessity been brought into contact, and in some cases almost familiarity, with many trades and callings. In years past I have been in frequent communication with both the employers and the workpeople engaged in the silk industries, and have been much interested in the revival of this trade in Great Britain, largely the result of the labours of Sir Thomas Wardle, of Leek, whose efforts were so ably seconded by her Royal Highness the Duchess of Teck, and the Duchess of Sutherland. In some personal interviews on the question of the silk trade with the Duchess of Sutherland I was surprised and greatly pleased to find what a grasp she had of the question, and how clearly and thoroughly she realised and set forth the only means by which prosperity could be revived in the silk trade. In the winter of 1895-6, through the kindness of the editor of *The Eastern Daily*

Press, I endeavoured to arouse some interest in the city of Norwich on the silk trade question, both by communications to that paper and by interviews with the Trades Council. I saw both shopkeepers and manufacturers, and my proposal was that samples of the textile goods still made in the eastern counties should be collected and submitted to view under the patronage and in the presence of these ladies and others to whom I have already referred. My advances were courteously received and my good intentions kindly acknowledged by those chiefly interested in the trade, but they unanimously rejected them. In my opinion there are goods now being made in the eastern counties, not only by motive power but by hand-loom, that, if brought conspicuously before the public, would command a wide and increasing sale, and would bring proportionate benefit to the employers, the workpeople, and to the county.

After aiding in the campaign in different parts of the country, I found that the time had arrived for looking after my own political fortunes. Hurrying back to Nottingham, I found myself confronted with a struggle which threatened disaster to my chances of re-election. For some years anterior to this Election the question of an eight hours' day for miners had assumed great prominence in the country. West Nottingham contained a good percentage of voters who earned their livelihood underground. I had already been sounded as to my position with regard to the proposed reform. Personally, I have never

regarded legislation of this character with any degree of favour, but I did not hesitate to assure my constituents that if an Eight Hours Bill should pass the second reading stage in the House of Commons I would, if re-elected, loyally accept the decision, and do my utmost in Committee to see that the full intention of the promoters of the measure was realised.

During the interval which had elapsed since his defeat in 1886, Colonel Seely had been assiduously nursing the constituency, giving freely to the various philanthropic causes in the neighbourhood. He owned most of the mines in the division, and took an early opportunity of announcing his intention, if elected, to support an Eight Hours Bill. As proprietor of many mines, there was nothing to hinder his adoption of an eight hours' day for the miners in his employ without the necessity of formal legislation; but he contented himself with securing the support of the miners by his promises and his vivid pictures of the terrible risks incurred by the men whose bread was earned underground. In spite of all this, I have never been convinced that the Eight Hours question was to any appreciable extent the cause of my defeat at the polls.

I have already alluded to my opponent's far-reaching influence as an employer and his vast wealth. He possessed the means of satisfying the social ambitions of many persons who were inferior in social status, but whose adherence at an election was by no means to be despised. All this he could do without laying

himself open in the slightest degree to the charge of exercising undue influence. Such powers will always be the possession of men of wealth and position, and so long as social influence exerts a sway over human nature, and that will be as long as human nature lasts, so long will such men be able to attract to their side the support of large numbers of their neighbours.

As the contest proceeded I missed from my meetings a number of influential persons who had supported me in 1886. I found also that the organisation at my back was greatly inferior to that which I had experienced in my previous campaign. Want of cohesion and lack of energy were painfully conspicuous. Little attention had been given to the work of registration in the past six years, and many voters having qualifications in either division had transferred their vote from the western to the eastern division. As time wore on I found a daily increasing band of well-dressed and energetic canvassers attacking all quarters of the wide division in the interests of my opponent; while I had no counterbalancing support, with the exception of a few faithful friends whom no influence could detach from me, but whose circumstances left them little or no time for work, except in the evening.

The election took place on the first Monday in July. On the Saturday a great open-air demonstration was held at short notice in the Forest grounds. No speakers from the outside world were there to assist me, but I received great aid, as I had done at all

my meetings, from the able and devoted Labour leaders in Nottingham, representing every branch of industry in the town except miners. This gathering proved an enormous success ; it was estimated that 6,000 or 8,000 persons were present. I was put into a carriage and drawn by hand through great crowds of people lining the Forest Road and all the streets through which I passed to my lodgings, and was only released after further speechmaking in the street. On the previous day I had received a letter from Mr. Gladstone expressing his hope that I should win my contest, and saying many good things about me, but it was too late to be of service. The demonstration on Saturday afternoon somewhat revived my drooping spirits and raised faint hopes of my prospects. On Monday, as I went from district to district, I felt that my doom was sealed. In the afternoon I made arrangements to leave Nottingham at an hour's notice, and when the result reached my lodgings, through the kindness of a newspaper reporter, everything was ready for the journey home, and I reached London before 4 o'clock next morning.

Colonel Seely won the seat, but the miners who supported him gained little by his presence in the House. When the Eight Hours Bill was introduced, ✓ the new Member for West Nottingham voted, I believe, in support of a motion which, by rendering the measure optional, robbed it of all practical value in the opinion of its supporters. In my opinion no Government is likely to make any serious effort to

bring about this change in the industrial life of the nation for many years to come.

Although I attributed my defeat to the social prestige of my opponent rather than to any considerable alienation of the mining vote, I must confess to a feeling of keen disappointment at what I am justified in calling the ingratitude of the miners. ✓ When I contested Nottingham in 1886 no miners' organisation worthy of the name existed. Everything was practically in a state of chaos when Mr. Bailey, the newly appointed miners' agent, arrived on the scene. I gave this gentleman every assistance in my power, introduced him to many of my political friends in the locality, and requested all my supporters to aid him as far as was in their power in his task of organising the miners. On several occasions I made special journeys from London to attend his meetings. Yet when the contest came Mr. Bailey openly espoused the cause of Colonel Seely and exerted every effort to secure my defeat. Notwithstanding all this I have always said, and am convinced of its truth, that in 1892 I received as many miners' votes as I did in 1886.

My position as a defeated candidate was the more unpalatable from the fact that, after six years in the wilderness, the Liberal Party had reached the Promised Land of power once more. Still, I had no intention of following Achilles' example and retiring to sulk in my tent. I presented myself at headquarters to offer my services during the remainder of the Election,

and I took part in several contests, returning to my own division in Norfolk to vote for and support to the utmost of my ability the Liberal candidate. But my cup of misfortune was not yet full, for, in the early part of September, in taking a long jump over a bank I landed with one heel in a rat's hole and broke one of the muscles of my leg. This crippled me entirely for six weeks, and several months elapsed before I regained the full use of the limb.

In the latter part of 1892 a Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into the condition of the aged poor. The late Lord Aberdare acted as chairman, and the Prince of Wales was a member of the Commission. An invitation to join it was gladly accepted by me, securing as it did a continuity of association with Parliamentary affairs. We sat from the end of 1892 to the early months of 1895, and even after this prolonged investigation the opinions of the members were so divergent that it was impossible to get anything like a unanimous report. I think it may be fairly claimed that all the members of the Commission applied themselves faithfully and steadily to the discharge of their task; but the work was extremely exacting, and before its completion the hand of death deprived us of our chairman, the remaining business being conducted under the presidency of Lord Playfair.

From the beginning the Prince of Wales was a fairly regular attendant, and took the liveliest interest in the proceedings, frequently examining witnesses

for himself, and displaying considerable skill in the work. But the sympathy with which his Royal Highness regarded the subject of the inquiry was more accurately gauged in private conversation than in the public proceedings of the Commission. Unfortunately, the conclusions arrived at by different sections of the Commission were so diverse as to make it practically impossible for the Prince to give public expression to his opinions without displaying the divergence of his views from those of one or other of these sections.

For my own part I have always entertained strong opinions on the treatment of the aged poor, and have again and again protested in vigorous terms against the degradation and injustice inseparable from the present administration of the Poor Law. I have always regarded the aged poor as members of a great national family who have not reaped their fair share of reward for their labours on behalf of national prosperity. On these grounds I hold that they are entitled, not to a pauper dole, but to a moderate and honourable pension carrying with it no more stigma or reproach than the pension of the civil servant and the soldier. To ensure this result I maintained that these rewards of a strenuous and hardworking life must be paid from the Imperial purse through independent channels as opposed to the system of local taxation and relief. This proposal, associated with proper safeguards and accompanied by some suggested reforms in the administration of the Poor

Law, I embodied in a memorandum to which I obtained no other signature than my own.

In a moment of weakness during the sitting of this Commission I consented to contest the vacant seat at Grimsby. Grimsby was one of the few towns in England I had never visited, although I had received many invitations to do so some dozen years previously, when I introduced the Leasehold Enfranchisement Bill. I arrived in Grimsby on the Saturday, and my Address to the constituents was due on the following Monday. On the way to my first public meeting the tram-car in which I was riding ran off the line at a bend of the street and nearly broke into a shop front. I am of a highly superstitious nature, keenly sensitive to my environment, and I immediately accepted this accident as an evil omen, though I took care not to reveal my forebodings to my supporters. As time passed, my anticipations of defeat grew clearer, and in less than twenty-four hours after my arrival I wrote to the Chief Whip of the Liberal Party that I had not the least chance of success, and that had not the writ been moved I would certainly have retired from the contest. Notwithstanding these private misgivings, I put as good a face on the position as possible, and found after two or three days that I had made considerable progress. Then a change came over the scene ; from all parts of the country flocked helpers and agents for the Conservative candidate, Mr. Heneage. It was the old gang who had dogged my steps before and whose tactics I have already

described. With might and main they strove to discredit me with the workers of Grimsby by spreading the old libels, and it was because my opponent seemed tacitly to approve of these underhand tactics by refraining from disowning them that I felt compelled, when the result of the poll was announced, to refuse to take his proffered hand. To add to my difficulties Sir William Harcourt introduced the Local Veto Bill two or three nights before the polling day, and this attack on their interests rallied the licence-holders and brewers to a degree I had never before witnessed to the Tory side. The case at once became hopeless, and I felt no surprise when I found myself at the bottom of the poll.

In the following year (1894) my friend Mr. Picton retired from the representation of Leicester, and I received a most unexpected and unanimous invitation from the Liberals of the town to succeed him. The terms of the invitation were such that I gladly acceded to this request, which had been endorsed by a large public meeting. By a curious coincidence Sir James Whitehead, the other member for Leicester, was seized with a serious illness which necessitated a long absence from the House of Commons. The Government's majority was too narrow to lose even one vote; so Sir James also sent in his resignation, and thus a double election was brought about in August.

In conjunction with Mr. Walter Hazell I was fortunate enough to secure a sufficient number of votes to place me once again within the sacred

precincts of St. Stephen's. But I had short time to enjoy the fruits of victory ; within twelve months Government was defeated and Parliament dissolved, and I was again in the throes of an electoral contest. Thus in three years I was engaged in four contested elections, in two of which I met defeat and in two victory.

This was not my first connection with Leicester Liberalism. Eleven years before the 1894 election a number of my friends came from Leicester to London to press me to become their candidate if I should receive an invitation from the Liberal Association of their town. This I was unable to promise ; I had no desire to make any change at the moment, and so I declined their request, never dreaming that on a future occasion Leicester would be the constituency to rescue me from the political wilderness. So far as I was concerned the contest was one of the pleasantest I had ever experienced. The struggle was fierce, but personalities were avoided and we fought on broad party lines. The Independent Labour Party forced the fighting with indomitable and untiring energy ; their candidate, Mr. Burgess, was a worthy champion of their cause ; but throughout this contest and the succeeding one in 1895 he never made use of any but the fairest and most above-board weapons against me.

CHAPTER XIII

A SOJOURN IN THE DESERT

AS session succeeds session the opportunities for initiating legislation open to private Members grow less and less. Except in the case of absolutely non-contentious measures, the private Member has not the remotest chance of success. Even then the risks are greater than anyone outside Parliament would imagine. By a series of fortunate circumstances a Bill may slip through the various stages to the third reading, and then an incident as trivial as the proverbial straw may wreck its chances of becoming law, unless, indeed, the Government should extend to it a gracious blessing—a favour which is rarely granted to a political opponent. It is astonishingly easy for Ministerial eyes to discover in the proposals of an opponent possible dangers, which are rapidly transformed into desirable reforms if the measure be the pet lamb of a political supporter. The same principles are applied to the answering of questions. Simple outsiders might suppose that Ministers, being public servants, are bound to assist Members on both sides of the House when they make inquiries in the interests of their constituents. Yet if a Member of the Opposition puts a question

whose purport is as plain as a pikestaff, but which is not framed in a minutely exact and technical manner, the Minister to whom it is addressed may blandly ignore its meaning and merely reply to its literal wording. To rise immediately, explain your meaning, and press for another answer, require an intellectual agility which few men possess.

I am strongly of opinion that we are drifting towards a Parliamentary despotism which, if unchecked, will relegate to the limbo of the past the freedom of action of private Members. Government majorities numbered by hundreds instead of tens may be a very present help in time of trouble to a jobbing and reckless Ministry, but they may also prove a serious menace to the liberties of the people. During the national fit of delirium which preceded and accompanied the early stages of the war in South Africa attention was drawn in the House of Commons to cases of serious rioting at public meetings and even in private gatherings. In some cases the police were alleged to have failed in their duty of protecting public and private rights. The flippant and unworthy apologies offered by responsible Ministers from the Treasury Bench were cheered to the echo by the apparently unanimous ranks sitting on the Government side of the House. Yet among these Conservatives there must have been some who possessed an elementary knowledge of the law by which citizens are entitled to the protection of the authorities in the exercise of their undoubted rights of free speech. Yet none dared to court the chastisement inflicted upon

men like Sir Edward Clarke, who was driven from Parliamentary life because he dared to criticise the diplomatic blundering and chicanery which characterised the Government's policy towards the South African Republic, or like the Member for Westminster, upon whose devoted head the Leader of the House poured out the vials of his wrath because he dared to denounce the incapacity and mismanagement which marked the treatment of our wounded and fever-stricken soldiers. If you have an overwhelming majority you can afford to apply the lash to restive units. One vote more or less does not matter, and the punishment is a warning to the rest. Thus a big majority and its effects may strike at the very heart of representative government. Who can wonder that, amidst such surroundings and influences, few Members of the Opposition find an opportunity of exercising their skill as legislators? Their main chance of distinguishing themselves lies in guerilla warfare and "sniping"; but the prospect of promoting a full-dress combat on orthodox lines is practically non-existent.

During the Parliament of 1895-1900 the Party with whose fortunes I am identified was mainly engaged in protecting the public purse against the raids of class interests, in defending elementary education, and in endeavouring to maintain the Protestant character of the State Church. Two Bills directly affecting the interests of workers were introduced in its course. The most important measure was the Compensation Act of 1897. This measure contains elements which,

if carried to their logical issue by future legislation, will prove a great Charter of Rights to the men and women of coming years. But to realise this aim will be a vast and difficult task, for there is one large class for whom as yet no provision has been made. The seafaring population possesses no articulate voice in Parliament, though ship-owners are influentially represented, and the man before the mast is therefore a negligible quantity.

The second measure was the Factory and Workshop Amendment Bill, introduced by the Home Secretary. I regard this as the most reactionary and insidious attempt to put back the clock of progress in modern legislation. It even went the length of proposing to permit a return to Sunday labour, thereby striking a blow at the fundamental principle of the protection of the labouring class. It would have made a rent in the shorter hours of labour movement at one stroke which might have destroyed the whole network of the laws restricting the working time of old and young, male and female alike. What amazed me was the absence of anything like a united national protest from the workers. A few conferences were held here and there, but nothing of the character of an impressive demonstration. The enormities of the Bill and its far-reaching and evil consequences were pointed out in an admirable tract issued by the Fabian Society. This statement of the case against the proposed measure was the clearest, most convincing, and most complete I have ever seen in matters relating to the Labour

cause. I believe it did more to destroy the Bill than anything else. In the House Mr. Tennant put down a motion which would have forced a debate on the defects of the Bill ; and after consultation with Sir Charles Dilke I gave notice of a motion that the Bill



MR. BROADHURST OBJECTS TO CLERICAL DOLES.

From *The Westminster Gazette*.]

[By kind permission of Mr. F. C. Gould

be read "this day three months," thus giving a direct challenge to the Government. From time to time I addressed questions to the Treasury Bench as to the date when the second reading would be moved, and a large number of trades-unions sent me letters and

resolutions approving of my attitude. Week followed week, but no second reading came, and finally the Bill was abandoned. Its author is no longer found in the Lower Chamber ; he has gone to that "other place" whence no traveller returns to the House of Commons. So we may suppose that his Bill will never be resuscitated.

One other reactionary proposal highly dangerous in my eyes I was successful in opposing during these years. A measure was introduced called "the Savings Bank Bill," which proposed to repeal the existing law fixing the interest paid on deposits in the Post Office Savings Bank at $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, and to give the Treasury power to determine at the end of each year what rate of interest should be given to investors. Under this arrangement no one would know what their deposits had earned till the end of the year, the one thing certain being that it would not be $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. I strenuously opposed this tampering with the principle on which the great national incentive to thrift is based. At the present time it is the only safe refuge for the savings of wage-earners. They know where their money is to be found at any time, and they know they will receive once a year sixpence for every pound saved. They have no anxiety about its security, and they have not to calculate in decimals the amount due. But once the arrangement is disturbed, a disastrous blow might probably be dealt at the national thrift. The habit of thrift is a shy bird, and once seriously alarmed, it would be a long and hard task to get it

to roost again. What is a small deficit at the Treasury compared with a danger such as I have mentioned? The advantages derived from the State by the poor are meagre compared with those gained by the rich. I believe all well-wishers of thrift will agree that the State should exert all reasonable efforts to encourage the saving habits of the poor, even if such a course involves a slight annual loss.

With the outbreak of war all prospects of further social legislation vanished, and to all appearances the nation was very well content that this should be. Parliament was dissolved at a time when the fewest possible votes could be recorded, and the date of polling was so arranged that it could not fall on a Saturday, the day most suitable for workers. The suddenness of the dissolution took many people by surprise, but at Leicester the powder was dry, the train laid, and the fuses prepared. It only needed the application of the match to precipitate the explosion. The addresses of both Mr. Walter Hazell and myself were in type, and election literature of every description had been printed and waited distribution. Committee-rooms had been bespoken, though not formally occupied and a splendid body of workers had been warned to hold themselves in readiness. So when the call came every man was at his post, and with the irresistible ease with which a well-launched vessel slides off the slips into her native element, the Leicester Liberals, under the command of our agent, Mr. Smith, entered the fray.

Under such favourable circumstances the candidate's part in the battle is of secondary importance. I held myself in readiness night and day to obey the orders issued by the Committee and the election agents. Every morning at ten o'clock the day's plan of campaign was issued. In my list of meetings a side-note opposite each meeting informed me of the probable character of the audience and the class of subjects most likely to interest them. A loyal though critical supporter went through the newspapers, and at five o'clock each evening brought me helpful extracts with introductory notes for use at my meetings; this service proved of the greatest value. The spare hours of the daytime I occupied in dictating letters and telegrams in support of fellow-candidates in different parts of the country. Then I had constantly to explain by wire why I could not be in several places at the same time, say, in Edinburgh and Cornwall on succeeding nights, or in Essex and Cheshire on the same date. I owed much at this time to my shorthand writer, whose accuracy and faithfulness, coupled with an excellent knowledge of affairs, never failed.

What a fight it was ! The keenest political observer could not forecast the issue with a population of more than two hundred thousand. My chief danger lay in the war in South Africa. Some of my best friends disapproved of my uncompromising attitude on that question, and six months before the election I had been called upon to explain my position to the Liberal

Council. True, I received a unanimous vote on that occasion ; but the Council numbered only a thousand, and in the background was a vast inarticulate mass of twenty-four thousand voters. Which of the names would they favour with the sign of the cross before it entered the ballot-box ? I tried to comfort myself with the sight of influential men joining the ranks of my workers and signing my nomination paper ; but the uncomfortable question would keep cropping up, "Where are the others?" Until the result of the counting was whispered in my ear, I had no rest from my anxiety.

When polling-day came I was provided with a "one-hoss shay" hired from a jobbing yard. A glance at the animal between the shafts revealed obvious defects of age and infirmity in the fore-legs. We had not gone far on our tour of the polling-stations and committee-rooms when the poor old steed gave us a taste of his quality by subsiding in the road just opposite a Conservative stronghold. Luckily, only the near knee was damaged, and (where I had been sitting when the accident occurred) I took care to sit on the off-side for the rest of the day. But the incident served to arouse my superstitious forebodings. I saw in this incident an evil omen for the Liberal Party, though as the fall had not occurred on my side, I felt that the brunt of it would not be borne by me. My forebodings proved only too correct. The fortune of war went against my colleague, and never did colleague feel more keenly for a comrade's

disaster than I felt that night when the news of Mr. Hazell's defeat reached me.

Although my majority was diminished, I polled an increased number of votes, nearly one thousand more than in 1894, and about seven hundred more than in 1895. Thus allowing for the increase in the number of voters, I could not have lost many supporters on account of the war. In fact, many of my best friends and devoted supporters were found among those who disagreed with my views on this question, but gave me the credit for being actuated by worthy motives and by a real regard for the honour and integrity of the British Empire. To their magnanimity I owe a deep debt of gratitude. If this spirit had been shared by Liberals in other parts of the country, the Party of Progress would be in a far stronger position to-day.

My election took place on October 2nd, and I immediately proceeded to Market Harborough, and thence to the Loughborough division, addressing three meetings at each place. My engagements then took me to the Rushcliffe division of Nottinghamshire, the Northwich division of Cheshire (where I spoke at five meetings), the Crewe division, and the Chesterfield division of Derbyshire. After addressing eighteen meetings in a fortnight from my own polling-day, I reached home on October 15th, just a month and four days since my departure for Leicester.

In connection with the Rushcliffe and Crewe meetings two incidents of interest occurred. My first visit for

political purposes to the former division had taken place sixteen years before, when Mr. John Ellis first contested the seat. Now I came on the same errand for the same candidate in the same hall, and this fact with the reminiscences it enabled me to recall was of great assistance at the public meetings. Mr. Ellis had served his constituents faithfully and well for sixteen years, but now he was assailed and "hard put to," as Bunyan would say, by the enemy. He was labelled a pro-Boer, and the letters he had written to persons in South Africa—absolutely innocent and even justifiable—were represented as an act of disloyalty. The gravest fears were entertained for his success; but character must and will tell in the long run, and the people had time to brush away the closely woven webs of calumny. As I stood before the two great meetings preceeding the polling-day, looking straight into the eyes of the people, I thought I could detect a favourable sign in their expression. So it proved, and Mr. Ellis came through the ordeal with a firmer hold than ever on Ruschcliffe.

At Crewe the same story was repeated. Mr. Tomkinson, the Liberal candidate, was nicknamed a pro-Boer, and every vote given to him was, of course, a vote for the Boers. I drove into Crewe from a meeting at Sandbach, only arriving at Mr. Tomkinson's meeting at 10 p.m. I was at once called upon for my speech, and went straight for the enemy's position. My aim was to show that the most useful ally of the Boers had been the incapacity displayed by the Tory

Government, and to support my contention I read extracts from the letters written for *The Daily News* by the Australian war-correspondent, Mr. A. G. Hales. I have never seen an audience so quick to grasp the situation or so full of enthusiasm. Mr. Tomkinson's long and faithful service on behalf of the Liberal cause, in the course of which he had been defeated in more than one keen fight, was rewarded by a notable success, and he was returned by a great majority. With this gleam of success my labours ended, and the story of my life is told.

[Writing on the threshold of the New Century, I confess the future looks dark and cheerless. The Nineteenth Century is closing amid wars and rumours of wars. In South Africa the largest army ever enrolled beneath the Union Jack has been decimated by disease and the rifles of the enemy to minister to the Mammon-worship of greedy capitalists. At home the image of the Golden Calf stands upon almost every altar. The clock of moral and social progress has been put back a quarter of a century, while ✓ militarism and clericalism walk hand in hand to and fro in the country. How many years must elapse before the ebbing waves become the flowing tide, I cannot tell ; but I fear they must be many. England, once the champion of oppressed peoples, has been incited to openly rob two tiny Republics of their cherished independence, and her name has become a by-word among the nations for this violence and oppression. Yet at home all but a small minority

are drunk with the war-fever. The clergy are dumb ✓
or openly espouse the cause of the Jingoës. Where
are thy prophets, O Israel? is our cry; but there
are none to answer. And so the Nineteenth Century
sets blood-red amid dark and threatening clouds.

CHAPTER XIV

ELECTIONS AND ELECTIONEERING

FEW men have had a wider experience of elections than has fallen to my lot. I have traversed the length and breadth of the land, at one time or another, to take part in some party contest, and there is scarcely a town of any importance in Great Britain where I have not appeared on a political platform. In his time his Honour Judge Waddy possessed a great reputation as the hardest traveller in the Liberal camp, and his mobility was envied by many younger men. But I doubt whether even Judge Waddy's record would leave mine far behind. In this chapter I have collected some of the odds and ends of my political career, curious incidents which have given colour to a strenuous life ; and at the outset I will instance a few of the political engagements I have successfully fulfilled, with no slight strain upon my physical strength.

In the days of my Leasehold Enfranchisement Bill I paid a round of visits to the principal towns of Devonshire and Cornwall to expound the principles of the measure. Leaving town in the morning, I attended a great meeting at Devonport, and then

proceeded to Camborne, where I addressed a huge gathering of men from all parts of the mining division. A reception for social intercourse followed, which kept me up till the small hours of the morning ; but before daylight I had resumed my journey, and travelled, by way of Bristol, Gloucester, and Cheltenham, to Birmingham. Here I addressed a large audience at eight in the evening on my Bill, finally reaching my host's house after a trudge through melting snow at 10.30 p.m., thus completing an eighteen hours' day full of excitement and the strain of travel in severe weather.

On one occasion I left London, after a hard week of late sittings in the House, at 10 o'clock on Saturday morning, addressed a large meeting at Bishop's Auckland, in the county of Durham, and regained my London home in time for breakfast on Sunday morning. Another time I left Brixton at an early hour of the morning for Tredegar, in the hills of South Wales. On my arrival I marched at the head of a trades-union procession round the town, addressed a meeting in the public hall, and after a slight interval for refreshments was in the train for London, reaching my home about midnight. While on a political mission in the West of England I travelled from Plymouth to London, caught the night train to Glasgow, and kept an important appointment in Lanarkshire early next morning. Perhaps my hardest bit of work was the occasion on which, after addressing a public meeting in Manchester at night,

I left early next morning, and spoke at a gathering of several thousands of people in Greenock the same night ; it was only after the meeting was over, when I had reached Pollokshields, a suburb of Glasgow, that I found time to take my first meal since breakfast. Even an iron constitution could not stand the strain of such journeys without some creaking of the over-taxed machinery, and I have since had reason bitterly to regret some of the prolonged fasts.

In my numerous railway journeys I have frequently met fellow-passengers whose agreeable conversation has pleasantly whiled away an hour of travel. But I have also had impressed on me the unwisdom of speaking unreservedly to strangers. In one instance I recollect, the matter had a pleasant sequel which makes it worth repeating. I was travelling from London to my home in Cromer, and had for a travelling companion a most interesting and well-informed lady, who talked well on most subjects, had travelled far and wide, and possessed a keen and instructed eye for the beauties of nature. During the journey she remarked the fine church of Worstead, and, struck with the elegance of its architecture unusual in so far-away a village, she inquired whether I thought it would be well attended. When I replied that most likely the congregation would seldom be large, she went on to say that she believed I was probably right, for it was a dreadful habit of the poorer classes to associate themselves with Nonconformist bodies. On that point I expressed no opinion, but assured her that,

at any rate, she would find a fine church to worship in at Cromer. "Yes, so I have heard," said the lady ; adding, "I presume you attend its services." Her consternation was almost pitiable when I replied that I was one of "the poorer classes" and associated with a Nonconformist body—*viz.* the Wesleyan chapel, whose services I attended on Sunday. But her penitence did not end with the profuse apologies at once proffered. On the following Sunday morning she presented herself at the Wesleyan Chapel, placed a handsome contribution in the plate, and when the service was over expressed her pleasure and profit she had derived there. Addressing me by my name, which she had learned since the preceding day, she frankly expressed her indebtedness for the rebuke so gently administered in the railway-carriage ; and so the incident closed to our mutual satisfaction.

Poverty, runs the proverb, gives one strange bed-fellows ; and certainly political pilgrimages make one acquainted with every kind of accommodation, from the lordly mansion to the two-roomed cottage. I remember in one county bye-election having to address a meeting in a straggling village through which, in days gone by, many of the mail-coaches travelled. The only remaining evidence of those prosperous times was what had once been a well-equipped hostelry, which had fallen on evil days. Upon my arrival, the doors of this hotel were closed to me on the ground that all the available sleeping accommodation was engaged—a statement which I had strong reasons to

doubt—indeed, it was obviously untrue. As I could not stay in the street all night, I sought and obtained accommodation in a labourer's cottage, where every exertion was made to supply my wants, and it was not the fault of my friends that their efforts were not entirely successful. I paid my bill in the morning, and as the poor woman did not know what to charge me, I made it out myself, receipted it for her, and handed her the money. She was scarcely able to find words to express her gratitude, for it probably amounted to more than a week's wages of the farm labourer in the neighbourhood. I took care to publish abroad in the remaining portions of the division my experience of this particular place; and a gentleman who had taken an active part in the contest on the opposite side declared, after the election, that they lost the battle mainly through the stupidity of refusing me sleeping accommodation in the village hotel.

On another occasion I was selected to deliver the annual address to some political institute or other in a large northern village. I had been informed by letter that one of their chief men would entertain me for the night if I would accept his hospitality, to which, of course, I readily agreed. It was a cold, damp night in early December when I arrived at my destination, and my host and others were in attendance to receive me. I was conducted with considerable pomp and ceremony to his house, which I found to be a general provision shop. The entrance to the residential part of the establishment was through the shop,

under the flap of the counter, and then across a large storage shed, which seemed to contain principally paraffin oil casks and other highly inflammable material—at any rate, so it appeared to me. I was amply entertained before the meeting, though to an epicure the viands provided might have seemed to be lacking in quality. A huge teapot filled with the blackest and strongest brew of that herb which “cheers but not inebriates” was set before me, and I was compelled to declare that it was entirely contrary to my habit to drink tea so late in the afternoon on account of its effect in preventing sleep. This did not raise me in the estimation of my host, who declared it was the strongest drink he ever allowed on his premises. If any beverage ever deserved the name of “strong drink,” that terrible decoction certainly did. Besides being a total abstainer of the most violent description, my host proved to be an anti-tobacconist, a vegetarian, and an anti-vaccinator, having recently testified to his conscientious convictions by undergoing imprisonment for his anti-vaccine principles.

My sleeping accomodation was about as narrow as my host himself. After scaling with difficulty a corkscrew staircase, I was ushered into a chamber wherein there was no danger of losing oneself. I experienced the greatest difficulty in finding space for myself, except in a recumbent position on the bed. A lean-to roof and a suspiciously closed fireplace did not add to my comfort, for I have always been one of the most fidgety and nervous of

people respecting my sleeping accommodation. However, I found some consolation in the fact that my whiskey-flask was quite full. I was glad enough to finish my repast and get away to the place of meeting, for I badly wanted a smoke as well as opportunity of hearing the political news of the district. I was in no hurry to begin the meeting, for as soon as it was over I must return to my dubious quarters. So far as I can recollect this is the only occasion on which I have longed for a meeting to last all night.

However, all things have their end, and spin it out as I would the meeting terminated at last, and I returned to the general provision shop. Once again I was conducted through the shop, under the flap of the counter, and through the oil warehouse to the living-rooms. My apprehensions of a fire returned with extraordinary strength. I remember that I resorted to every expedient I could summon to my assistance to engage my host in conversation, and thus while away the hours of night. Politics, vaccination, temperance, anti-tobacco, woman suffrage, the opium question—all these matters were questions upon which my friend had strong opinions. Every one proved as successful as I anticipated, and so the time went merrily on, until I had exhausted every subject I could think of. In despair I turned to my host's business affairs, suggesting that they must be extensive and hoping that they were profitable. But I had selected my topic in an unlucky moment, and my host's reply proved entirely

destructive of any prospect of sleep that I might have entertained.

It occurred in this way. He began by explaining the difficulties encountered and the watchfulness necessary in connection with shop-assistants, and he went on to expatiate upon the sins of mankind in general and the carelessness of apprentice boys in particular. This was not disturbing to my nervous system, but when he added that he had been lately suffering from an invasion of rats and mice, my hair nearly stood on end, for no woman in creation was ever more ready to scream or faint at the appearance of these creatures in a bedroom than I. But even this was not the worst. He went on to describe their destructive habits in this particular establishment, where cases of lucifer matches were housed in the same shed with the paraffin oil, and he told me how only a few nights before one of these inquisitive vermin had gnawed through a case containing many dozens of boxes of the old-fashioned red brimstone matches, which were guaranteed to light anywhere with the least possible amount of friction. Then, with great pathos and indignation with the rat race, he described how one of them had just worked through a packing-case and was immediately upon the matches themselves when it had evidently been disturbed. Had a few more minutes elapsed before the interruption, the contact of its teeth with these explosive goods would undoubtedly have set the case on fire. The dozen or so oil barrels would most certainly have joined

in the fun, and that establishment with others would inevitably have been destroyed. He proceeded to assure me that when you lived under these conditions there was always the fear of an outbreak of fire at any moment. Then, as if to cap the whole situation, he explained that my bedroom was immediately over the oil warehouse, and warned me that if I heard any noises in the night I was not to be alarmed. Then with a hearty good-night the worthy man took his leave.

Wellington's petition for "night or Blucher" was not more hearty than mine for daylight or sleep. Very early in the morning I descended from my unkindly couch, and with the excuse that the country habits of my youth were sometimes not to be denied, I escaped the offer of breakfast, and caught the first train of the day, thankful that I had escaped the fate of untimely cremation.

On another occasion a somewhat similar experience befel me. I was speaking at a public gathering in the West of England. My host for the night was a man of humble position, but, like all West-country folk, exceedingly hospitable. Before proceeding to the meeting I was invited to partake of a repast, for which, after my long journey from London, I was quite ready. My hostess had evidently made most elaborate and plentiful provision for my needs, but the assortment of dishes was scarcely inviting. They consisted of a plate of mussels, another of winkles, with cold bacon and plum cake as side-dishes. My heart—or some other portion of my anatomy—quailed before the sight, and I

hastily assured my hospitable friends that my tastes were exceedingly simple, that bread-and-butter formed my staple food, and that my doctor absolutely forbade my touching shell fish. I felt no small compunction at the disappointment clearly felt by my refusal to partake freely of the dainties, which had evidently been most carefully prepared in the strongest of vinegar and the hottest black pepper.

Nothing is easier for a public speaker than through ignorance of local feeling to make a serious blunder when addressing a meeting in a strange locality. On the other hand, luck may turn this very ignorance to unexpected account sometimes, as it occasionally has done for me. On one occasion I was addressing a meeting in support of Mr. Cozens Hardy at Melton Constable, and as we were on the borders of Mr. Joseph Arch's constituency, I did not forget him in my speech. Wishing to get home that night, I hurried through my address in order to catch my train, and was just about to leave when a man in the audience rose and begged leave to put a question. About this time the Tory Party, through the medium of the Primrose League, were endeavouring to poison the minds of the agricultural labourers against Mr. Arch on account of the large measure of failure then attending the operation of the Agricultural Labourers' Union. My questioner wanted to know if I could give any information about the balance-sheet of Mr. Arch's Union. I replied that it was a matter with which I was not personally connected and into which I had no right to inquire.

I added that I knew nothing more of the Union's balance-sheet than I knew of the balance-sheet of my questioner, and with that I left the platform. As I hurried to the station I caught the sound of repeated roars of laughter which rather mystified me. Later on the mystery was explained. It appeared that the gentleman who had displayed so much anxiety about the solvency of Mr. Arch's Union had himself been recently in financial straits, from which he had only been relieved by the process which is known as "passing through the Courts."

Another instance of the same good luck occurred at a large meeting in Worcestershire. The main burden of my speech was the advocacy of Home Rule for Ireland. A well-dressed man sitting a dozen rows from the platform kept interjecting remarks that would have been very confusing to many speakers. While I was pressing home one of the chief points in my argument he suddenly exclaimed, "You had better give them whiskey than Home Rule." I turned to the interrupter and assured him that although his sole aim in life might begin and end in the consumption of strong drink, the Irish people had objects far loftier than the gratification of such a desire. At this the meeting broke out into a mighty cheer and rose in a body to jeer the interrupter, who promptly made his escape. I heard afterwards that he was one of the hardest drinkers in the district.

A curious incident of mistaken identity, in which a newspaper reporter was taken for me, occurred at a

great meeting I addressed in Crewe. The reporter in question was good enough to send me an account of the incident, and I cannot do better than let him tell his tale in his own graphic manner.

MR. HENRY BROADHURST'S GREATEST TRIUMPH

A MEMORABLE NIGHT

PART I

IF twenty-four hours were allotted me in which to arrive at a decision on the question whether I would prefer death to a repetition of the worst ordeal I ever suffered in my life, I think the time would be spent in earnest prayer for the withdrawal of Mr. Henry Broadhurst from the political sphere. It would afford me the only means of escape. But by the cleverest design or arrangement it would be utterly impossible to place me in such a predicament that I should again be lionised by an enormous crowd of persons in mistake for the great electioneering champion of the Liberal Party, whose eloquence had aroused them into a state of wild delight. The effect of that eloquence upon myself is lifelong. Since they called me "Mr. Broadhurst" and paused for one of *his* speeches from *me*, I have most carefully avoided situations in which it would be possible for me to perform the smallest part of a public speaker.

I am stating here a few simple facts, and in order to make them quite clearly understood I would ask for the difference to be specially noted between an orator with a marvellous influence over his audience and a nervous man who would fall speechless if called upon for a sentence. These two persons—namely, Mr. Broadhurst and

myself—happened to meet one night in November, 1885. It was the time when the whole world was interested in the question of alleged intimidation of the artisans of Crewe by their foremen in the service of the London & North-Western Railway Company. I only refer to it now in trying to convey an idea of the vast importance of the contest in which the local political parties were then engaged, and to emphasise the special reason why the Liberals sought the help of their most influential leaders who were likely to give it. After a secret conclave the local Liberal leaders agreed unanimously to invite Mr. Henry Broadhurst, as their chief speaker, to a demonstration. The fact that the municipal elections, fought on political lines, had gone overwhelmingly against the Liberals 'greatly increased their anxiety and accentuated their fears. For it was taken as a positive indication that the workmen, who on former occasions had given abundant proof of their Radicalism, were really afraid to vote against the railway company's officials, who were the Conservative candidates.

When it was announced that Mr. Broadhurst would address a meeting in the Corn Exchange on behalf of the Liberal candidate for Parliamentary representation, not a great many were expected to constitute his audience. Yet so attractive was the personality in that specimen of a working man whose life, was an example to self-helpers, that hundreds of men who lingered outside the Corn Exchange ventured inside when he rose to speak. The place became crowded, and crowds remained in the main street immediately outside who were stronger in common curiosity than in political feeling. For a while the meeting was passive merely, and I, a reporter, had already made notes about insipidity, coldness, despondency, and so forth. A change, a marvellous change, occurred within an hour. As a Pressman of considerable experience I have attended

hundreds of political meetings—meetings which were addressed by Cabinet Ministers and by Ireland's most eloquent representatives (modern Mark Antonys, some of them)—and it is with perfect sincerity and truthfulness that I commit myself in writing thus: the most enthusiastic of all was Mr. Broadhurst's meeting at Crewe, with only the solitary exception of the "record" meeting in Bingley Hall, Birmingham, where an audience of 20,000 people addressed by Mr. Gladstone on Home Rule cheered him continuously for ten minutes.

The hearts of the Crewe artisans were touched. There was a fellow-feeling between the speaker and themselves. Mr. Broadhurst secured their close attention and then their deepest sympathies by a most entertaining and touching account of his experiences and hardships in early life—of the "insolence of office and the spurns that patient merit of the unworthy takes." All that gloom, that ennui which characterised the early part of the proceedings was dispelled, and an appeal (I can liken it to nothing I ever heard elsewhere) to the chivalry of free men completed the transformation perfectly. I write of it, possessing a memory on which that occasion will ever remain indelibly impressed, as about the most sensational fact of electioneering history, that in an hour Mr. Broadhurst, single-handed, crushed the great monster of intimidation which had become such a terror, and captured Crewe, then one of the new divisions, for the Liberal Party. I am not sure that the misadventure that occurred to me after the meeting did not save Henry Broadhurst's life. The men might have killed him by a demonstration of personal attachment. With this "possibility" in view, prudence was exercised in devising a means whereby the hero might escape the crowd, which in increasing proportions waited without.

[*Exit* BROADHURST; *enter* YOUR HUMBLE SERVANT.

PART II

REALISING how inconvenient it would be to push through the dense crowd at the main entrance, I waited inside the building for a porter who had promised to lead the way to an exit into a quiet side-street. Fifteen minutes previously—just before the meeting ended—a gentleman had entered this way. He said he had been in a neighbouring hotel, and I readily believed him. He was not able to express himself very clearly in giving me to understand, as he did, that a cab was waiting in the side-street to take him home, a few miles in the country; and as I was going in the same direction homewards, I was delighted when he said, "Come along with me." We reached the door, and it was suddenly flung open just as I was asking him what all the hubbub outside was about. The meaning of it—there was not time to realise it before striding across a narrow footpath to the cab-door—was plain enough after we were seated in the conveyance. The impatient crowd, suspecting the subterfuge to avoid an open-air demonstration—the strategy to get Mr. Broadhurst away—had rushed round from the main entrance to this side-street, being perfectly right in supposing it was intended to convey him off in this very cab. Someone had seen it and guessed the secret. It was Mr. Broadhurst's cab. What right had I in it? The thought brought on a great dread of all kinds of punishment.

The night was dark, very dark, and there was little or no light—a fact which had been considered over the plan of escape. When, therefore, we two persons emerged from the doorway it was impossible to discern what we were like in general form. I heard afterwards how Mr. Broadhurst got away. It was simple enough. Finding the main entrance clear, when the crowd rushed round to the cab, he slipped off unobserved. I, even I, the most

nervous being alive, was that Mr. Broadhurst, the invisible object of the admiration of the wrestling, yelling, delighted multitude, for a space which, though an eternity in the imagination, was limited in actual time to some five minutes. A strange metamorphosis, indeed! The proceedings in that period, commencing with three thundering cheers that "made the welkin ring" as the people crushed us into the cab, it is impossible for me to adequately describe.

The cabman waited. Of course I had no authority to order him on. He told me later that his orders were to wait for Mr. Broadhurst and three other gentlemen who were to accompany him in the drive to his hotel, and he was waiting when we entered for "the other two." The clamour of the crowd for a speech developed into a sort of madness, and as the cab remained motionless, feelings of hope and wonder must have become strangely mixed. Some wondered, "what was up," and some said "he was only thinking of what he had to say."

My friend expressed his firm conviction to me that everybody was mad drunk, and it was a pity, he observed, that he was the only man who could take a glass and keep sober. My life, I felt, was at stake, and so I durst not curse him. Louder and wilder became the demand for a speech, and the pressure around the vehicle increased as the throng itself increased with "outsiders," attracted by the "scene." Amid all the fearful tumult my companion coolly dropped the window on his side and, thrusting his head out, tried to make himself heard. Some little time was spent in noisily calling for silence. Then, commanding attention by shouting "Ladies and gentlemen," he succeeded in convincing them of his inability, through circumstances over which he certainly ought to have had control, to make a speech. No one knew what he was trying to communicate or what more there was in his mind than some confused ideas about closing-time, Broadhurst's good

health, his own pugilistic abilities, and admiration for himself and the Grand Old Man. In a maudlin manner he called for three cheers for—presumably for me. The crowd, doubtful hitherto which of us two was Mr. Broadhurst, knew positively now, and after my friend had withdrawn everybody made for my side. Efforts were made to open the door. I held the handle inside with all my strength, and I suppose they concluded that the door was locked. Everybody joined in renewed clamour for a speech. I was dumb enough already. They paused for a response. Shouts followed: "Let him take time," "Give him a chance," "He's done up," "We'll *make* him say something." One man insisted that if I was too exhausted to speak, I should at least condescend to lower the window and shake hands with my admirers. A further pause, then more clamour. I heard another voice imploring, "Now, Harry, lad, just one word," and yet another, as if coaxing me to sing, "Just a little more encouragement." It surprised them that I still remained mute. It alarmed them. Said one suspiciously, "Why the devil won't he speak? There's something up with him."

The darkness of the night was so far my best protection, but I had now practically given up all hope of escape. Every moment I was expecting the appearance of Mr. Broadhurst and his friends, and wondering how many there were, and what the torture would be when he had indignantly cast me out upon this mob, incensed as they must be by my deception. Mutilation and inquests came across my mind. I mention this seriously, truthfully. I believe my heart sank to the very lowest depths of despair when someone exclaimed, "Broadhurst must be ill. Let us break the window and get at him. Who has got some matches?" Matches were produced and struck. The wind came to my aid while I ducked down and tried

vainly to crouch under the seat. I was sure they would presently discover me, drag me out, and pitilessly lynch me. My friend, who had hitherto seemed little concerned, now began to manifest some uneasiness. He tried to tell the cabman to drive on. The cabman understood ; and himself much alarmed, accepted the order and cracked his whip. By the horror of the situation I was bereft of so much of my wits that I could not think of the possibility of being driven off deliberately in Mr. Broadhurst's cab. Before the driver could find an opening in the crowd, though he desperately sought one, it was proposed by one madman and readily decided by a host of others to unharness the horse and draw their hero themselves triumphantly to the Liberal Club. The endeavour occasioned greater excitement, alarming confusion, provoked the cabman into hostilities—he slashed his whip right and left, and startled the horse, which had already been prancing about impatiently. Its rearing and plunging caused a stampede, the driver laid on mightily with his whip, and the animal dashed off wildly. The mob who followed were soon outpaced, and only three persons knew where we halted.

Before that night the Conservatives boasted of promises being made to them of votes which, after reasonable allowances, would give them a majority of about 2,000. The result was, the return of the Liberal candidate by a majority of over 800. It was Broadhurst's greatest triumph, and I know it.

In an earlier chapter I have alluded to a vein of superstition which runs in my blood. This may be the result of heredity or of the rural environment of my early years ; but whatever its source, I have never been able to get rid of it. I remember as a lad of sixteen working in a village six or seven miles from

my home, and my way to and from work lay across fields and a large common, where I seldom met any human being. I used to leave home on Monday morning at half-past three, in order to be at work by six, returning on Saturday night at six o'clock. One dark winter's night I was taking my homeward way at a brisk rate along a footpath bordered on one side by a thick hedge. Suddenly I thought I heard someone on the other side of the hedge calling in distinct tones, "Harry! Harry!" I recognised the voice instantly as that of the wife of one of my brothers, and so strong was the impression made upon me that I stopped short and listened intently. But no other sound was to be heard, and I continued my journey. The first news that greeted me on my arrival home was the announcement of the sudden death of the person whose voice I had heard calling me by name.

After an interval of many years I was the recipient of another intimation of death, though hardly of so striking a character. It was in the autumn of 1886 that, at the earnest solicitation of a friend, I spent a month's holiday in Scotland. The spot selected was Gullane, a quiet, sandy village lying between North Berwick and Aberlaidy. Readers of the works of Robert Louis Stevenson will remember that he makes Gullane the scene of Allan Breck's escape and David Balfour's capture in "Catriona." It was here that I first saw golf played, and, needless to say, in a few days caught a very severe attack of the golf-fever. Unfortunately, urgent business called me

back to London before I had been at Gullane a week ; but the affair did not take long to settle, and I was able to return to Scotland by the following night mail. For some inexplicable reason I have always experienced some timidity in crossing the long bridge which spans the Tweed at Tweedmouth and Berwick, and my imagination would persist in picturing the vibration sustained by the masonry from the weight of the heavy locomotives and railway-coaches. On more than on one occasion, when crossing the bridge, I have drawn a mental picture of a fearful disaster caused by a collision or by the giving way of some portion of the structure.

On this particular journey I had slept well till we reached Newcastle. As soon as we had left that noisy station behind I dropped off to sleep again. But my slumbers were disturbed, and presently I was dreaming that the train was in the middle of the stone bridge over the Tweed when one of the arches gave way, and the train was precipitated into the river. Dragged down beneath the surface of the water, I experienced a terrible feeling of suffocation and realised the pangs of death. In my dream I fancied my old friend Alfred Bailey, of Preston, was with me, and in the midst of my death struggle I wondered if he were sharing the same ghastly sensations.

I awoke from this horribly vivid nightmare in a perfect frenzy, the perspiration standing in great drops upon me. Rushing to the window, I found the train whirling through the Berwick station just as daylight was breaking. Needless to say, I had no more sleep, and was

glad to reach Edinburgh, where a refreshing bath and a substantial breakfast at the Club in Prince's Street speedily restored my composure. I caught an early local train to Longniddry station, and drove thence to my lodgings in Gullane. As I entered the garden-gate a messenger ran up with a telegram addressed to me. Tearing it open, I found it contained the announcement of the sudden death of Mr. Bailey at Preston. He certainly had been ill for some weeks, but no one expected a fatal termination to this illness. These two events—the dream and Mr. Bailey's death—made a strong impression on my mind; and a week later, meeting the chairman of the East Coast Railway, I related my vision of the night. I believe as a consequence the bridge was thoroughly examined by the company's engineer, and, I need scarcely add, it was found to be as stable as a rock and as firm and solid as the day it was first opened for traffic.

In the foregoing stories I am afraid I have dwelt too much on my own success at repartee. To convince the reader that self-complacency is not the principal ingredient in my character, I will tell one or two incidents where the laugh was certainly against me. A few years ago I went one morning to call on Lord Rosebery at Berkeley Square. Near the Liberal leader's residence extensive repairs were being carried on, and this so changed the appearance of the place that I could not determine whether the house under repair or the next was his. Unfortunately, I had forgotten the number, and I was at a

complete loss to know at which house to knock. As I stood uncertain a butcher's boy came along laden with a tray of meat. Of him I inquired which was Lord Rosebery's house, and pointing to the one I had just decided to try, he answered, "That's it." I thanked him, and was just about to ring the bell when I heard a shout. Turning round, I found the lad gesticulating furiously; pointing to the area gate, he was calling out in loud tones, "That's the way for you! There's the area gate! You mustn't go to the front door, I tell you!"

Another experience of the same kind befel me when Mr. Somers Somerset, the son of the Lady Henry Somerset, made his first bow before the electors of the division of South Herefordshire. I was deputed with Mr. Ellis Griffith, the Member for Anglesey, to attend the demonstration which was to be held on August Bank Holiday. I was to stay at Eastnor Castle, but I had not been informed of the place of meeting. My train was late in arriving; I was tired and hungry after a long journey, and I felt I must get some refreshment before facing the audience. Coming out of the station I found a pair-horse carriage awaiting me, with a smart coachman on the box and a dapper little fellow in top-boots and cockade with his hand on the door. When we had got clear of the town I asked the coachman where he was going to take me. "Oh! to the front door, sir," he replied. I thanked him and ventured no further inquiries. Of course, I intended to find

out whether I was being conveyed direct to the meeting before going to the Castle.

An amusing instance of mistaken identity occurred during the prolonged sittings in the early part of 1880. On this particular occasion I had remained in the House till seven o'clock in the morning, when I gave notice to the Whips that I must go home. They urged me to remain another hour or so, but I refused, alleging that my house was entirely unprotected except for my dog, and he would want his breakfast by the time I reached home. This statement, duly embroidered, was repeated with much success by one of the legal advisers of the Government, gaining a wide circulation, and at each stage receiving many interesting additions. A few days later, when, thanks to the exertions of the Irish Party, all-night sittings were of almost unbroken continuity, Mr. Grant Duff happened to meet Mr. Thomas Burt on the terrace, and of course the obstructionist policy of the Irishmen was the burden of the conversation. Now, Mr. Grant Duff had heard the dog story, but somehow confused the hero and ascribed its origin to Mr. Burt. Being a noted dog-fancier and breeder of dogs himself, he naturally alluded to the incident, and remarked, "Yes, Mr. Burt, it is a killing time ; but I agree with you that the dogs should not suffer, and I am glad to hear that you insisted upon going home the other morning in order that your bull-dog might have his breakfast at his regular hour." Only those who know the grave and staid Member for

Morpeth can realise the look of horror which overspread his countenance at the idea of his owning a bull-dog. "I don't know to what you refer, Mr. Duff," he exclaimed. "I never owned a dog in my life, and certainly not a bull-dog." Mr. Grant Duff hurriedly withdrew, with profuse apologies. But the story did not end there. At a later hour in the evening another Member was discussing with Mr. Burt the all-absorbing topic of the exhaustion of Members and its effect on their health, when Mr. Burt exclaimed, "Yes, and on their minds too, for Mr. Grant Duff has actually been asking me what time in the morning I retire from Parliament to feed my bull-dogs!"

CHAPTER XV

LABOUR MEMBERS IN PARLIAMENT

I HAVE often been asked what I think of Labour representatives in Parliament, and this seems a favourable opportunity of jotting down some impressions on this large question. In the early days of trades-unionism the idea of Labour Members of Parliament was opposed by nearly all classes, and received even by the great mass of workmen with indifference. In fact, working men have never been enthusiastic about having representatives of their own class in the legislative assembly. If it were otherwise we should have at least fifty Labour Members in the present House of Commons, in spite of financial obstacles. In most of the great centres of industry the working class population possess an overwhelming preponderance of votes, and if they were determined to be represented by one of themselves they could sweep away all opposition. They could relieve him of the expense involved in the hiring of large halls for public meetings ; the considerable cost of postage might be avoided by mapping out the division into streets and half-streets, and the necessary literature distributed by men appointed to visit each section ; and

the heavy outlay on bill-posting could be dispensed with by the use of the windows of voters' houses. In such ways the cost of a contested election might be reduced to reasonable limits. Of course there would still remain the official or returning officer's charges. These frequently amount to two or three hundred pounds for each candidate, and the sum must be paid down before the returning officer will accept the nomination papers. It is a monstrous shame that in a country boasting of a free Parliament this golden bar to freedom of selection and election of a Parliamentary representative should be maintained. So long as it continues there can be no free representation. I have on more than one occasion made efforts in Parliament to relieve candidates from this imposition and transfer the burden to other shoulders, as is now the case in all local government elections. With fifty Labour representatives in Parliament instead of the present number, less than a dozen, now returned, the reform I have outlined might easily be obtained from the most reluctant of Governments. Other reforms would quickly follow, such as the payment of Members, including a rearrangement of the hours during which the House of Commons sits, securing the adjournment of debates at ten o'clock in place of midnight, which would enable Members to reach even suburban homes without trouble. This is an extremely important matter for Labour Members, because accommodation can be obtained at a distance of miles from Charing Cross at one-fourth the cost of that in central London.

These points will readily suggest others to thoughtful politicians. Speaking from my own experience, I have found Parliamentary life for a man of circumscribed means to be a life of drudgery and of great personal sacrifice. Then why not retire? the reader will naturally ask. My reply may seem paradoxical, but it is true that in some cases it is easier to get into Parliament than to withdraw from it. For example, Party exigencies often compel a man against his will to remain a Member, and when one is committed to a contest no Britisher cares to lose the game. Again, if you have spent a half or even a third of your life at Westminster the fascination of the place gets hold of you. The excitement of the opening of each session rouses even the most jaded Member. There are always many interesting men to be met at St. Stephen's whom one could not encounter elsewhere, at least, not under the same favourable social conditions. There are the distinguished visitors of all colours and nationalities. And to descend from great things to small, there are the strawberry teas on the terrace in summer. Although the characteristics of this function have greatly changed during the last few years, but sometimes even now you may find there men of world-wide fame in different walks of life. To these charms you must add the pleasure of showing your friends and constituents the historic features of the buildings and its contents. If your visitors happen to be uninteresting your knowledge of the place becomes very limited. If they are of the opposite character, and especially if they happen

to be young and attractive members of the predominant sex, the cunning legislator enlarges on his theme, and when knowledge ends is not above improvising. These are a few of the elements which an analysis of the fascinations of the House of Commons reveals. Every August when the House rises the weary and washed-out legislator vows never again to enter those dreary portals; but the early days of February find him among the first-comers to place his hat upon the sacred cushions, his loins girded and his sword buckled on, fresh as any young blood for the fray.

Many good folk of unimpeachable Liberal sympathies look upon the idea of the payment of Members with grave suspicion. They believe it would degrade the dignity of the British legislation. But why? Lord Salisbury and the Duke of Devonshire are millionaires, and the pay attached to their respective offices must be a matter of utter indifference to them. Yet they take their ministerial salaries as regularly as the humblest messenger in their departments. The receipt of a stipend does not offend their sense of dignity. Take the case of Mr. Chamberlain. No one supposes he cares two straws for his five thousand a year as Colonial Secretary. This emolument does not influence his work; he could do equally well without it, and never be compelled to take one cigar or one hansom less than he does now. Then why should the Labour Members lose dignity by receiving from the State a stipend which would enable them to obtain the necessities of life in the discharge of a national duty

you
you
dog!
you!

without those irksome and galling necessities at present inseparable from their existence? The British Parliament stands almost alone in refusing to remunerate its Members. It is difficult for the outsider to realise the constant calls on one's petty cash account. Cabs are out of the question, except in pressing emergencies, and to meet the exceptional outlay retrenchment in other directions must follow. You must eat and drink, and the most frugal meal will cost you twice the amount of a meal taken at home. You cannot tell a visitor, especially a constituent, that to give him a cup of tea will put an inconvenient strain on your resources. Your dress must be decent. Postage is one of the most constant and serious burdens to a poor man; the most moderate estimate on this head is sixteen-pence a day, and woe betide the luckless victim who has charge of a motion or a Bill which attracts even partial interest in the country! Equally to be deplored is your fate if a considerable body of your constituents take a deep interest in a Bill promoted by another Member and express by letter their desire that you should support the measure. You may reply by postcard, certainly; but a couple of hundred postcards cost a good deal of money. All Ministers have their letters franked, and they possess secretaries to deal with their correspondence. Rich Members can find similar relief from the drudgery of letter-writing; but to the Labour Member this correspondence forms a continuous physical and financial tax which he ought not to bear.

The belief that Members are paid for committee work is not confined to the working classes. I remember twenty years ago being advised by a solicitor of mature age, who had acted on several occasions as election agent to a prominent politician, to take care to get my share of committee work ; the pay would be a great assistance to me. Many people who are too polite to refer directly to the matter share the belief of my lawyer friend. This foolish but widespread error is, I believe, a considerable hindrance to a poor Member's receiving the consideration his pecuniary position entitles him to. Yet it is not confined to the outside public. Only a year or two ago I received a note from a Member of Parliament of more than twelve years' standing in the House of Commons, asking in confidence whether any payment attached to service on a Royal Commission? To be credited with receiving handsome payment when you are getting nothing aggravates your comparative poverty.

Other opponents of the payment of Members object that it would encourage professional politicians and adventurers. It is the greatest delusion in the world that the present condition of affairs keeps them out ; but of course I cannot enlarge upon this point without involving myself in unpleasant personalities. I firmly believe that the reduction of election expenses in the direction suggested above, together with the payment of Members, would introduce to political life many men of great ability who are prevented now from offering their services by reason of insufficient incomes.

I think it may fairly be claimed for those of my order who have been or are now in Parliament that, amidst all the display and glitter of wealth by which their lives in the precincts of the House are surrounded, they have not lost their heads, but have retained the simple habits of life in which they were reared. In fact, I have no hesitation in affirming that their frugal and homely habits have exercised a restraining influence upon some of their wealthy colleagues. Most of them have their homes in the provinces, and this involves a separation from family life for the greater part of the year. The result is an additional cost beyond the ordinary one of maintenance.

Two great interests lack Parliamentary representatives on the Labour side—*viz.* agriculture and shipping. It is most desirable that intelligent representatives of these vast industries should be found in the House of Commons. Their needs were formerly voiced by Mr. Joseph Arch and Mr. J. Havelock Wilson, but neither are now ^{Members}. The capitalists and owners in both interests are largely represented; but it cannot be for the highest good of the State that these two interests, which are the basis of national prosperity, should possess only a one-sided representation in the National Assembly.

I believe a good case for the success of Labour Members of Parliament can be made out from the records of the past thirty years. When one thinks of the mistakes which might have been made but have been avoided by the small band of working

men who have found their way into Parliament, one is bound to express admiration at their good sense and self-restraint. To realise the full meaning of this statement the reader must carry his mind back to their original condition of life. Some were born before the days of board schools and compulsory education ; all were the children of poor parents. Some began to earn their living at an age when the majority of their fellow-members had not escaped the charge of the nursery governess. Their future appeared to be hedged about by the necessity of physical toil for a weekly wage ; Parliament and politics were meaningless terms to some. Even now their situation amazes them ; they have been thrust from position to position without design or forethought. They find themselves in a whirl of excitement, surrounded by the possessors of vast wealth, the bearers of noble and ancient names, the learned professor, the profound philosopher, the intrepid world-traveller. Yet in this vast human maze they hold their own with credit. Here and there may be found eccentricities, but no boorishness, little if any vulgarity, and no disordered minds. They have earned a reputation for their class of solid and abiding worth to the commonwealth.

CHAPTER XVI

MEN I HAVE KNOWN

MR. JOHN BRIGHT was always regarded with some suspicion from the trades-union point of view. This was probably inevitable from the nature of his opinions in all matters affecting trade. He was essentially for absolute freedom of action in this and kindred matters; but the trades-unionists thought that he carried this practice to extremes in connection with Labour matters, and on the question of Labour representation he was not thought, from the workmen's point of view, to be orthodox. He had spoken against class representation, and so had the workers; but their position was better defined, as being opposed to class exclusion, which was the case until the period commenced in 1874 and 1880 and further developed in 1885 and 1892.

As Secretary of the Labour Representative League I had had some correspondence with Mr. Bright with regard to some speeches he had made on the proposed sending of workmen to Parliament, and none of his replies were considered to be quite satisfactory. As a general politician, apart from Labour questions, he was, of course, universally idolised by the workers,

and no part of the community more highly appreciated his great statesmanship and magnificent oratory.

When I was returned for Stoke in 1880, these little divergencies of opinion did not prevent his giving me a warm welcome to the House of Commons, and during the remaining years of his life he was always exceedingly friendly, perhaps I ought to say exceedingly kind and generous, in his bearing towards me, always ready with a jocular remark, never patronising, and many and many an hour have I spent in his company in the smoke-room listening to his talk on subjects weighty as well as witty ; no man's company and conversation afforded me greater delight, instruction, and entertainment.

The meerschaum pipe presented to me by the Glasgow Trades in 1881 was a formidable-looking object, and required considerable care in handling for fear of breakage. I am not a lover of meerschaum pipes, nor indeed of any pipe except the good old clay ; but having received this as a token of goodwill, I thought it my duty to colour it in order to testify to my Scotch friends my appreciation of their kindness. I used to charge this pipe with great care and exactitude, that the colouring process might be carried out systematically, and with some regard to finish and effect in that line of art. Mr. Bright, in a jocular manner, would persist in taking the deepest interest in the progress of that undertaking ; he would frequently examine the result of my labours, and inquire as to the time occupied

and the cost incurred, and what period of time I thought would be necessary successfully to accomplish my task. His inimitable humour when pursuing these inquiries can only be appreciated by those who were privileged to know him in his arm-chair moods. I became greatly attached to him, an attachment which almost amounted to affection, and this apart altogether from his public life and great position in the nation.

I have heard some of his great speeches, and I shall never forget the St. James's Hall speech in the 'Sixties during the Reform agitation. His peroration was magnificent, and its effect electrical. It seemed to exalt the very soul of the audience, and left an impression which few of his hearers can have forgotten.

Another speech which deeply impressed itself upon my mind was made during the debate on the Burial Bill in the Parliament of 1880, when Mr. Bright was pleading for greater freedom for Nonconformist interments in churchyards. During this speech he described the devotion of an old worker with whom he had been acquainted, who for many years had walked fifteen miles each Sunday to visit the grave of his dead wife, buried in unconsecrated ground, and with tremendous effect he asked the House to say whether devotion of this kind would desecrate the consecrated ground of the Church. The passage was almost sublime. He spoke from the Treasury Bench, his long white locks shining in the rays of light streaming through the western windows of the House; the combination of colour and the age of

the orator, his deep pathos and his great earnestness, produced an indescribable effect upon the House, and did much to soften the tone of debate and to promote a freer passage for the measure through Parliament.

It will be an everlasting regret that no worthy likeness in statue form is left to the nation of the Great Tribune. His was a face, like many others, that cannot be reproduced in marble after death ; the only effective likeness I can conceive to have been possible of him would have been one modelled from life in clay by a supremely sympathetic artist. The great characteristics of sympathy, love, and devotion written deep on some faces are, in my opinion, utterly impossible to reproduce in marble, and the attempts made and the failures experienced should not be too severely visited upon the heads of the unhappy sculptors who take up a task almost humanly impossible.

Another man for whom I had an exceptionally deep personal regard was the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon. I looked upon him as one of the strongest men of our age, the simplest and kindest of men. A two minutes' chat with Mr. Spurgeon was like a week's sea-breezes to the weary metropolitan worker. I met him only on rare occasions, but I count it one of the good fortunes of my life to have known him even thus slightly.

One event in my life in connection with the American people I shall always remember with pleasure and pride. I think it was in 1877 that General Grant visited London. I was charged with the duty of

preparing an address and organising a deputation of Labour representatives to present it to the distinguished soldier-statesman. He was not a man easy of access, and it was with difficulty that we were enabled to arrange an interview with him. But when the preliminary obstacles were overcome he received the address and the deputation with marked favour, and it was said by one who knew him that his speech in reply, short as it was, was marked with exceptional warmth of feeling and pleasure. A man less like a great soldier and the defender of a great nation in outward appearance could not be conceived, and it was only in the indescribable atmosphere of his presence that one could at all realise his greatness and strength of character.

The only other American of distinction it has been my good fortune to have personal acquaintance with was Mr. ^{James} Russell Lowell. I first met him at a breakfast party at Mr. Gladstone's house. I had read his poems, with many of which I had been greatly fascinated, and some of which I liked better than any I had ever read. Of course this led me to regard him with more than usual interest. I liked him in person as much as I did in his works. I met him again at a public dinner a few years after, and was surprised at his approaching and speaking to me in a familiar manner, as if we had been in the habit of frequently seeing each other. He was a capital speaker, so far as I heard him, and his conversation was most enjoyable.

Cardinal Manning was another man for whom I had a great regard. I first met him when serving on the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Poor. I do not regard him as a great statesman, or as one having what might be described as the grip of things ; but undoubtedly his soul was overflowing with the milk of human kindness, great forbearance towards the weaknesses of humanity, and deep sympathy with its trials and sufferings. At his request I met him on several occasions at his private house. Our common bond of sympathy was the bettering of the condition of the workpeople. My speech against the opening of museums and picture-galleries on Sunday enlisted his hearty sympathy and support, and on one occasion, when discussing this question in his house, he asked whether the great fact had ever occurred to me that London, the centre of the world for civilising and Christian influence, in addition to being the greatest centre of commerce that the world has ever seen or known, almost voluntarily agreed to forgo the delivery of letters on Sunday, and apparently suffered no inconvenience in its competition with the world from this fact. He spoke most strongly against the growing habit of Society of turning Sunday into a day of pleasure, frivolity, and social gatherings, assuring me that he made it a rule never to dine out on Sundays, and that he had endeavoured to use his influence with his friends to cause as little labour as possible either in their own domestic circle or outside it on the sacred day of rest. Then he descanted with that beauty of language and

refinement of feeling peculiar to him on what life might have been without the day of rest, and the danger to Labour of tampering with its sacred observance. A discussion and a homily from him on such a subject as this had a similar effect upon one's emotional feelings to that produced by a magnificent sunset on a summer's evening.

In these occasional interviews and chatty half-hours he only once raised a subject upon which I could not agree with him, and that arose in connection with the education question. Knowing that I was a worshipper with the Wesleyan Methodist Church and that I had all my life been associated with that body, he approached me on the question of religious teaching in the schools, and seemed to be under the impression that the overwhelming majority of Wesleyan Methodists held similar views to his own. Although having no authority to speak for them, I could and did unhesitatingly speak for myself, and expressed strong views against increased grants for sectarian teaching in elementary schools, and I ventured to express my gravest doubts as to the information which had been given him regarding the position of the majority of Methodists in relation to this subject. He was visibly disappointed—I might almost say that his face betrayed evidence of some pain at the views I stated. With some expressions of regret the subject was dismissed, and it was never again referred to, but I do not think it in any way lessened his friendly feeling towards me.

In many respects two of the most remarkable dinners I have attended were both held at Greenwich. One was given by Lord Rosebery as a compliment to the Labour Party early in 1886. Among the guests were Mr. Gladstone, Mr. John Morley, and a few other prominent members of the Liberal Party. Lord Rosebery was at the head of the table, and I was on Mr. Gladstone's right. The dinner was the most jovial I ever remember ; politics were abandoned, and the feature of the evening was the telling of good stories by our host, Mr. Gladstone, and Mr. Morley. Needless to say, the Prime Minister easily took first place. Some of his House of Commons reminiscences of the time of Peel, Palmerston, and others would have been worth preserving had I been in the habit of keeping a diary. Possibly some of the others present may have done so.

One anecdote, however, I remember quite well. I think it was Palmerston who, Mr. Gladstone told us, had a wonderful habit of sleeping in his place on the Front Bench, and his head would move backwards and forwards to such an extraordinary degree that it frequently attracted the Speaker's attention, and even alarmed him. At the close of the session the Speaker privately gave orders for the backs of the two front benches to be heightened, so that those occupying them might, with very little inconvenience, rest the head on the top of it, to the delight and comfort of dozing Front Bench Members in the next session. This explained—what I never understood

before—why these benches are more comfortable for a lounge than those in the other part of the House.

Mr. Gladstone also reminded us that in those days the tea-room in the House was arranged very much after the fashion of a London coffee-house—that is, having rows of settles, with a narrow table between—where it was the habit for Members to get their chops, accompanied by a fragrant drink made from Chinese tea. On one occasion when Palmerston was enjoying his evening repast at one of these tables, Hume went over to Mr. Gladstone, who was sitting in the same room, and remarked that he thought Palmerston had something in him and might possibly prove a useful and active Member of the House in course of time!

The second political dinner, curiously enough, took place in the same year, and also at Greenwich, in the month of August. At the first one we were a great and powerful Party, and to many there appeared to be a brilliant future in store for us. But the disasters which followed upon the introduction and rejection of the Home Rule Bill in the June of that year had by August left us a scattered and disjointed remnant of the all-powerful Government of a few months before. On this occasion our host was Sir Henry (now Lord) James. The company numbered about a dozen. Amongst them were Sir William Harcourt, Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Jesse Collings, Mr. Asquith, and some others, including myself.

We went down in the orthodox style by boat from Westminster. It was the first occasion on

which I had noticed Mr. Asquith. On the way down I kept wondering who he could be, but before going in to dinner Sir Henry James introduced me to him. I failed to catch his name, and I took the first opportunity of asking Sir Henry to tell me who he was. I said: "I did not catch the name of the young man to whom you introduced me just now. He is an interesting looking chap, and I should like to know more about him." Sir Henry's reply was: "You will very soon know about him; he is one of the ablest and most brilliant among the new Members elected to Parliament of late years." He certainly made some impression upon me, but in what direction I could not well say. He appeared to contain great strength of will; a rather strongly hewn Yorkshire face showing unmistakable pugnacity of character; bluntness,—principally in manner only. On the whole, I took him to be a man with whom it would not be wise to have an unnecessary quarrel. How far Sir Henry's estimate of his future has been fulfilled all the world now knows. Certainly Mr. Asquith's outward appearance has undergone a remarkable change, for at the present time he is one of the best dressed and most presentable men among the Liberal leaders.

The dinner was one of the most elaborate I ever sat down to, with regard to the number of courses, the quality of the food, and the variety of wine and fruit. It was a curious gathering, and for the first half-hour or so the conversation seemed to hang fire and there did not appear any prospect of its

becoming a cordial meeting. Our resourceful host exerted all his marvellous powers of ingenuity to infuse life into the company, and presently addressed an inquiry to me across the table as to the state of health of my bull-terrier, asking whether I had lately brought him to the House of Commons. 'I replied that he had not recently visited that place with me, but I thought the time was coming when it would be necessary to bring him in order to clear out the rats. The tone, the occasion, and the manner prevented the remark from being considered offensive, and no one joined more heartily in the laughter which greeted my hint than Mr. Chamberlain and his friend Mr. Jesse Collings. The meeting at once became more genial, and a very pleasant evening was the ultimate outcome. I have always thought that the real object of that dinner was to prevent, if possible, the unhappy differences which had so lately culminated in placing the Conservatives in power from becoming chronic. I firmly believe that some at least of the Unionists at that time were quite unaware that the cleavage was so wide and reunion so remote as it has proved to be, and that the gathering was intended to be a golden bridge by which the two sections of the Liberal Party might be reunited. Events have proved how great was the disappointment of those who hoped for this result.

During the years in which I was frequently in personal contact with Mr. Gladstone I always received at his hands the deepest consideration. Nothing could

exceed his forbearance and civility to me. During my residence at Brixton Hill I cultivated pretty successfully a fine bed of carnations and some very lovely pinks, the roots of the latter being given to me by the late Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild. Of the carnations I was particularly proud, and on several occasions I sent small boxes of them to Mr. Gladstone, who wore some of the blooms in the House of Commons. During the progress of my illness from 1888 it was thought that the only chance I had of living for any considerable time was to leave London and to reside permanently in the country. For this purpose I built myself a cottage at Cromer, to which I removed in May, 1890. Before I left London Mr. Gladstone came to my house at Brixton and took tea with me, a neighbouring doctor who attended my family, my wife, my niece, and a lady friend of theirs being the only persons present. He spent something like an hour and a half with us, recounting some most interesting personal reminiscences, and talking pleasantly of the events of the earlier part of the century. Then he plunged into the story of the Free Trade conflict, telling us of the price of sugar, tea, coffee, bread, and other necessities of life. It was one continuous, gossipy conversation from the time he entered to the time he left. I remember his noticing a large photograph of my famous bull-terrier, for whose warlike and determined appearance he expressed admiration, and suggested that one or two of that breed would prove valuable

defenders to the public purse, if they could be placed at the entrance of the Treasury Department. Then he drove back to the House, and from that time I had but few opportunities of personal intercourse with him.

Mr. Gladstone's civilities to me were not merely personal, but intended, as I always felt, to show that he recognised the claims of the labouring people to consideration. Probably no statesman uttered words so helpful to Labour representation as he did. Speaking at Birmingham in 1888, on the occasion of receiving an address of the workmen of that town, in the conclusion of one of his speeches, the like of which no other man could make, and speaking of the difficulties of selecting the right representatives, he used these striking words, which I may perhaps be pardoned for quoting :—

“I can assure you that I never submitted a recommendation to Her Majesty for the filling of a political office with greater satisfaction than when I submitted the name of Mr. Henry Broadhurst. I did so, not only because I knew that he was the representative of the working men, chosen by the working men, but I had had the opportunity of seeing his character and his qualities tested, in circumstances of difficulty, and I knew that there was not a more competent and capable, and more creditable and honourable representative of the working classes than Mr. Henry Broadhurst. I will add this, that if by any unhappy accident Mr. Henry Broadhurst had been taken out of our

view, and had been found in any circumstances not in a position to take office at that time, there would have been no difficulty in selecting from his colleagues another representative of Labour, a man who would have done honour to the same office if he had been appointed. We all wish, we all sincerely and cordially wish that the number of working men in Parliament should be increased. We are very glad to have those who are already there, but undoubtedly the number ought to be increased."

On my way to the Aberdeen Trades Congress in 1884 I found it necessary for the discharge of some official duties to break my journey at Edinburgh, and subsequently learned that that particular night had been suddenly fixed upon for a great reception to Mr. Gladstone in the Waverley Market. The Edinburgh Trades Council had been invited to nominate a speaker to represent the Labour Party of the city, and they unanimously selected me for that purpose. On receiving this great compliment I saw at once that such an arrangement would not be satisfactory, nor would it fulfil the object in view, and I pointed out that the speaker must be an Edinburgh man. This view of the case they reluctantly acquiesced in; but I received a platform ticket to witness this great sight. It was stated that there were 16,000 persons in and about the covered market that night. As Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone entered the building the combined bands struck up and the vast mass of people joined in their

national song, "Scots wha hae for Wallace bled." The effect was tremendous. I did not after all escape a part in the meeting. There were loud calls for me from several parts of the hall, and I had to respond. Up to this time Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone had no knowledge of my presence, and when I left my seat for the rostrum, they both rose and gave me a hearty greeting, which event appeared to excite great enthusiasm amongst the audience.

The next morning I resumed my journey to Aberdeen, and found just outside Edinburgh that a saloon car sent on from Dalmeny had been attached to our train. Thus I became a fellow-traveller, as far as Aberdeen, of the great leader. It was the first occasion on which I made a journey in the same train as Mr. Gladstone, although not the last one. From Edinburgh to Aberdeen was one continuous and brilliant march of triumph. The fact that the idol of the masses was to travel in that train was known throughout the districts abutting upon the railway for the whole length of the journey. Every station was lined with people; at some of them presentations were made. Constant delays of the train occurred, and the utmost exertions of the railway officials, supported by bodies of police, were needed at the stations to prevent accidents to the people, who clambered up steps and on the roofs of the coaches to get a glimpse of their hero. At Perth most elaborate preparations to prevent rushing and crushing had been made, and the regulations were

strictly observed by the people until the train pulled up. Then with one united plunge forward, locks, bolts, and bars were rent asunder, police and station officials were overwhelmed, and the whole building was flooded with a seething mass of human beings. In a lesser degree this state of things continued till we reached Aberdeen. Here my journey finished. If I remember rightly, Mr. Gladstone went on to Haddo, Lord Aberdeen's house near by, and the following week to Braemar, from which place he sent me a cordial invitation to spend a day with him at that Highland holiday resort, but I found it impossible to do so, on account of my official work at the Trades Congress.

The most interesting occasion outside the House of Commons at which I was present in connection with Mr. Gladstone was in July, 1888, when those who served under him in his late Government and some few others of his close and most faithful political supporters presented him with his portrait on his Golden Wedding day. We assembled in one of the large reception-rooms at the house of Lord Spencer. A space backed by folding doors opening into an adjoining room was roped off, and within this were seated a few intimate friends. Presently the folding doors opened, and Lord Granville entered with Mrs. Gladstone on his arm, he carrying a bridal bouquet, and she wearing a long veil, said to be the one she wore on her marriage day fifty years before. They were immediately followed by Mr. Gladstone in semi-

wedding dress, who took his place beside his wife. When all was ready Earl Granville approached the aged pair, with that refinement of manner for which he was so justly celebrated, and in a voice full of feeling and in tones bordering upon reverence he read a short address of congratulation, and, if my memory serves me truly, he mentioned the fact that he had met Mrs. Gladstone before she knew Mr. Gladstone. Then, in a kneeling position, he kissed her hand, bowed, and took his stand behind them. Mrs. Gladstone's few words of acknowledgment were almost inaudible by reason of her emotion. Mr. Gladstone then spoke, shortly referring to his long friendship with Lord Granville, and with some references of a touching nature in harmony with the event. Then the proceedings closed, and we all dispersed.

I have in my time seen many notable events. I was in St. Paul's at the Thanksgiving Service on the recovery of the Prince of Wales; I have seen nearly every great demonstration held in London since 1866, and have taken part in most of them; I was at the opening of the Imperial Institute in May, 1893; I was present at the laying of the foundation stone some six years before; I had a good position in Westminster Abbey on the occasion of the Jubilee Service in 1887; I have seen shipwrecks and gallant rescues. But I have never witnessed a scene so rich, so full of pathos, so suggestive of the higher life, the ideal co-existence attainable by poor human nature, as that shown on this occasion

by the aged couple whose life was so lofty and noble. Its effect upon one was that of a wedding of two pure and spotless souls, rather than that of the fiftieth anniversary of the marriage ceremony. Few in the room there were who could have articulated clearly at that moment, had they been called upon to speak ; a silence as of the grave prevailed among the forty or fifty privileged persons. Speaking for myself, I felt the whole scene so intensely that I seemed incapable of speech or thought of anything except the feeling engendered by the scene just witnessed. If some master hand had been present to have described it in adequate language or painted it with a living brush, the scene in Lord Spencer's house that day would have lived long in the history of the country.

Of the world-wide day of mourning when we committed the ashes of our dead leader to the grave in Westminster Abbey I shall not attempt to say much. It was the culminating hour of weeks of anguish. We do not know, we cannot tell whether the spirits of the departed ever know of the streams of pure love which gush out from the souls of those who are left behind when a dearly loved one is committed to the earth. If they do, how must the soul of William Ewart Gladstone have been uplifted on the surge of tears shed by those he knew, and by countless numbers whose faces he had never seen, but whose lives had been ennobled by his hallowed life !

My place in the procession was a little in advance of the coffin. We had waited lingeringly round the

mortal remains of him we loved, as a broken-hearted mother clings to her dead first-born. But the order came, the sections filed past, and we emerged from the great doors of Westminster Hall into a keen and wintry air. My eye involuntarily sought the clock-tower, on whose tall flanks I had worked, chilled to the bone, nearly thirty years before ; and memory recalled one bitter cold, wet day in the winter of 1858-9 when, almost barefoot, I had crossed the Palace Yard on my way to the club-house of my union. The contrast was almost overwhelming : then unknown and penniless ; to-day in a place of honour, the sorrowing colleague of the greatest Englishman of the century. So we passed on between the solid walls of humanity, standing with bared heads in absolute silence.

Within the Abbey my place was on the north side of the grave. On my immediate right was the late Lord Chief Justice, and on my left Lord Justice Rigby. Behind sat the Lord Chancellor, and as the Duke of York retired from his post of pall-bearer he brushed against me. Then the Prince of Wales, to-day the King of the mightiest Empire the world has known, advanced in reverence to Mrs. Gladstone, and before us all kissed the trembling hands of the widow of the greatest commoner of our land. Thus did the first gentleman of the nation acknowledge the equality of all humanity in the presence of the King of kings.

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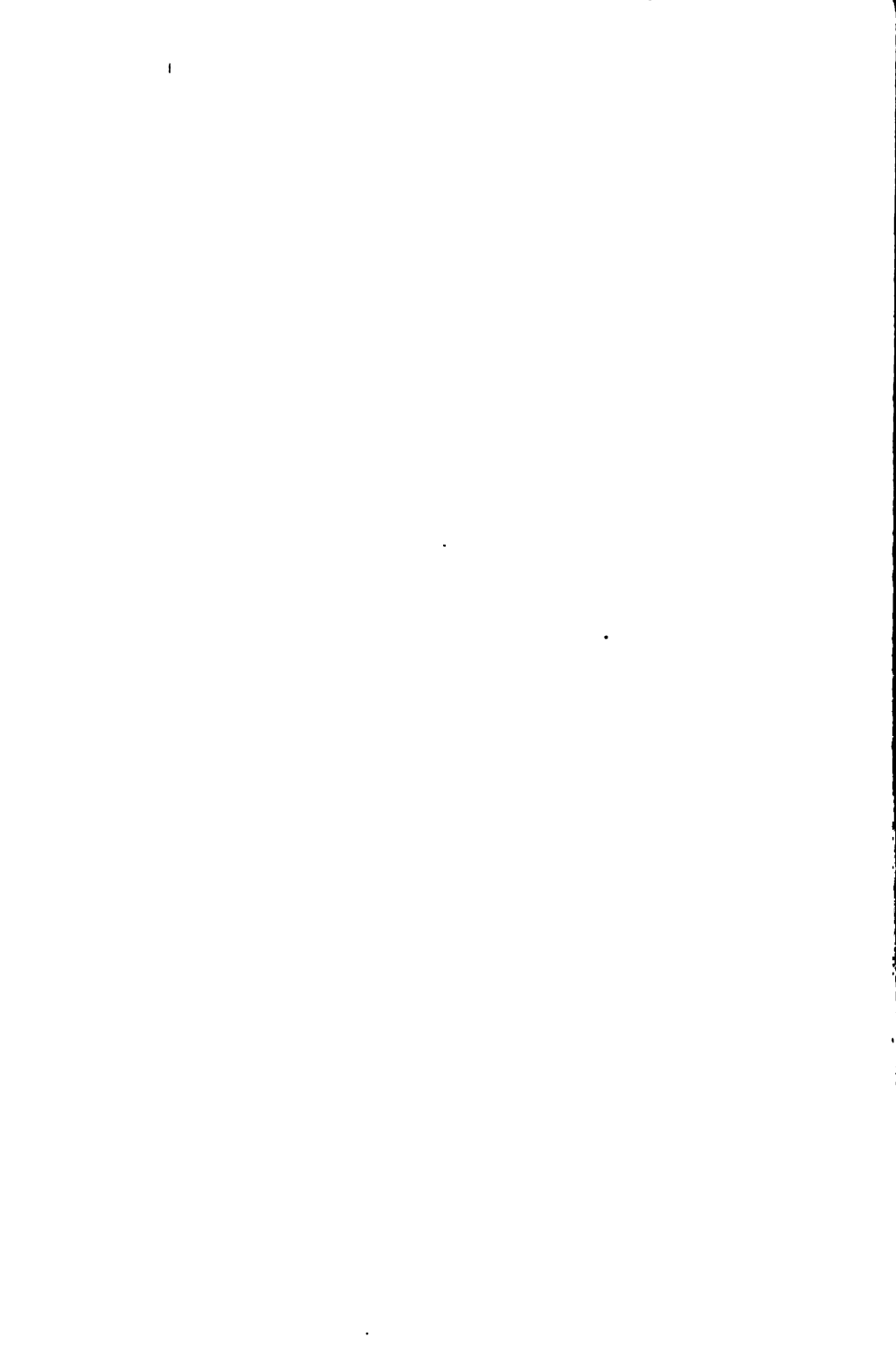
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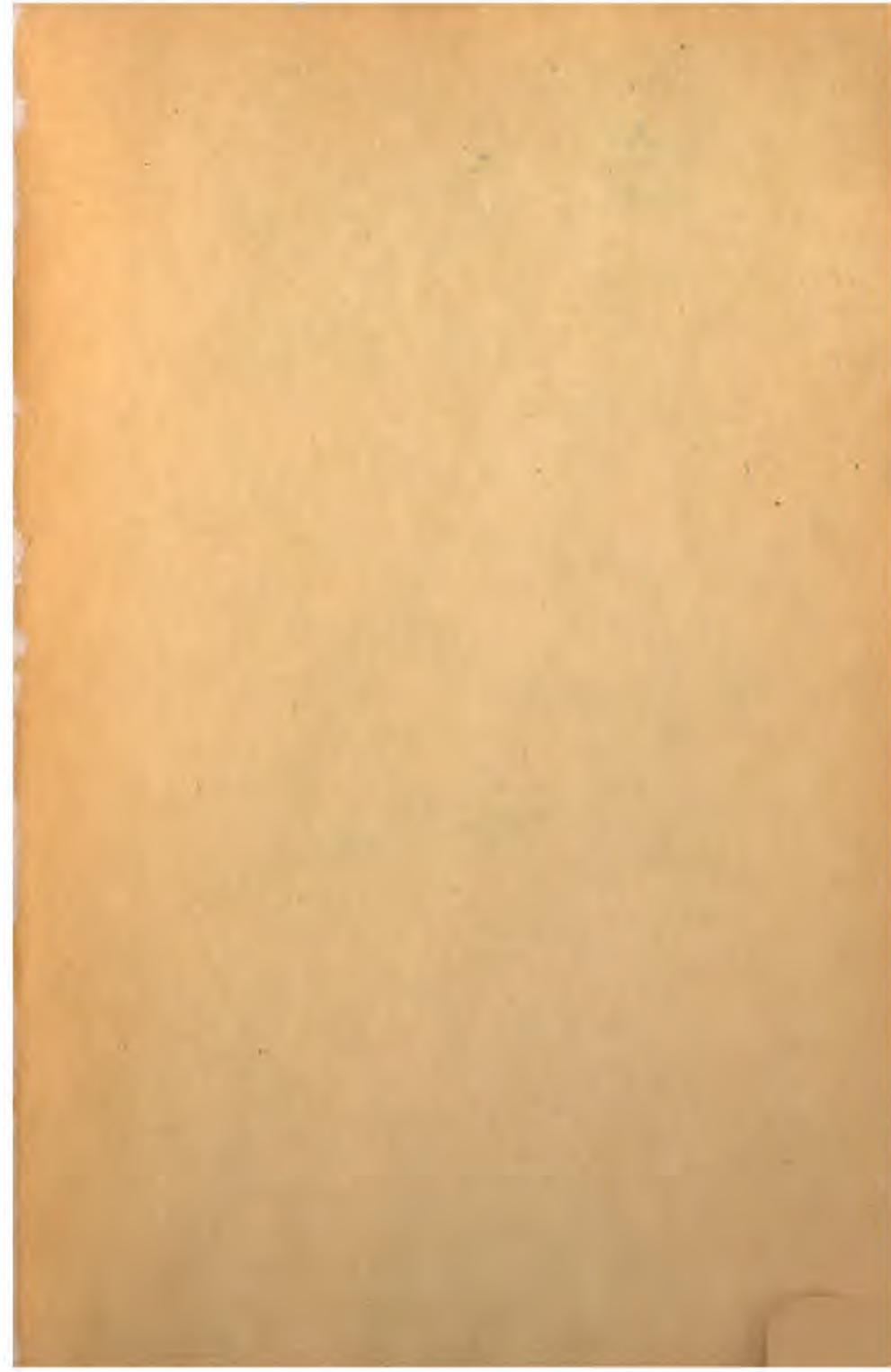
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